

6 December 1994

Michael's Police Interview Transcripts with Analysis: No. 2

NAME OF SUSPECT: MICHAEL ALEXANDER ROSS

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 06/12/94

POLICE OFFICE: KIRKWALL

INTERVIEW COMMENCED: Start: 1613 HOURS
Finished: 1645 HOURS

INTERVIEWING OFFICERS: DI Angus Alexander Chisholm
DS Alan MacKenzie

DI Time is now 1613 on Tuesday, 6th of December 1994 (061294). I am Detective Inspector Angus Alexander Chisholm, of the Criminal Investigation Department, of the Northern Constabulary. At this time we are within the interview room at Kirkwall Police Station. The following further persons are also present in this room.

DS I am Detective Sergeant Alan MacKenzie, also of Northern Constabulary, Criminal Investigation Department

MR I am Michael Alexander Ross

DI Okay. Would you confirm for me Michael, that you've seen me break the seal of two cassette tapes, complete the label on each cassette, number K027-C94 and insert them in the tape recorder.

MR Yes, I have.

DI Okay. Right Michael, I'll just remind you, you're under caution, you're going to be asked questions about the murder at the Mumataz Indian Restaurant, you're not bound to answer any questions, but if you do, your answers will be tape recorded and may be noted and may be used in evidence. Do you understand?

MR Yes.

DI Okay. Right since we spoke to you last time Michael, we've been doing some research into the background of all this. Em, the balaclava you're telling us about, can you confirm for me how many of them we are talking about. How many your father now still has?

MR I think he's still got two.

DI He's still got two.

MR Yeah.

DI What colour are they?

MR They're black.

DI And have they got eyeholes, or are they open faced?

MR Yeah, they've both got eyeholes, and a mouth hole.

DI Both got eyeholes and a mouth... Where did he get them?

MR I dunno where he got them.

DI Right, so you used one of his recently did you?

MR Yeah when I was at Hoy.

DI But didn't tell him?

MR No.

DI And why was that, after all the hassle of previous having with your folks over, over the balaclavas, why take this one?

MR Because eh, there's a lot of midges in Hoy and that I took it eh, stop them from biting my face and that, and in case we were gonna go walking up the hills and that.

DI So did you not look a bit stupid, there, being the only one with a balaclava on in good weather?

MR Yeah I suppose.

DI That didn't bother you?

MR No.

DI So you were the only one there wearing this balaclava with two eyeholes and it's just to stop the midges?

MR Yeah, well I took it out in case we were going to go hill walking, or that instead.

DI Mm.

MR As well to.....

DI Oh right. Have you ever shot a 9mm pistol?

MR Yes, I have.

DI When was this?

MR Well, I've shot, I've used a 9mm pistols a lot of the time, at eh, the shooting range with me Dad.

DI Whose pistols are they?

MR My dad's and I've had a shot of a couple of other fella's 9mm's at the range.

DI What make are your Dads pistols?

MR Eh, my Dad's got a 9mm Browning High Power. He's got a 9mm Lugar, he's got a 9mm Colt government, 1911 or something like that.

DI Mmhm.

MR He's got a 9mm Styre.

DI Any others?

MR No that's all 9mm's he's got.

DI And are they all operational?

MR Eh, I think the Styre it's got a bit, something wrong with the barrel, and it can't fire right.

DI So how many of these weapons have you fired personally?

MR I've fired the Browning, the Colt and the Lugar.

DI And do you fire them fairly regularly?

MR Eh, not really, I fire them now and again, when my Dad's got ammo, when we're at the range, or that.

DI Mmhm, when would you have last fired, them?

MR I don't remember, a long time ago.

DI Sometime. Have you fired any since the murder?

MR Eh, I've fired the Colt I think the 9mm Colt.

DI What sort of ammunition is it you use?

MR Just, 9mm balls.

DI Whose ammunition is it?

MR It's me dad's.

DI Right, and whose is the other two, that you've fired their pistols, who are they?

MR I've fired lots of pistols, I've fired a.....

DI The 9mm I'm talking about.

MR Eh, I've fired a, a Heckler and Koch P9 at the range, and eh, what else, I've fired a Walther P38, at the range but it was an awful long time ago.

DI Whose were they?

MR Eh, well the Heckler and Koch was [REDACTED]'S I think and the Walther P38's eh, [REDACTED]'S

DI And that was out on the range?

MR Yeah.

DI Are you quite a good shot?

MR Not too bad I suppose.

DI Yeah, are you keen on guns?

MR Yes.

DI Mmmh, do you own any firearms of your own?

MR Well, I've got air rifles and air pistols, but I don't have any other sort of firearms, that belong to me.

DI So how many air pistols do you have?

MR Well, they're not really mine, I just share them with me dad, but there's about 3 or 4 in the house I think.

DI So where is it you fire them?

MR I just go to me Granny's and shoot rabbits and stuff.

DI Your grannies, which granny is that?

MR That's eh, eh, Granny [REDACTED].

DI [REDACTED]?

MR Yeah.

DI And you've got another Granny in town here have you?

MR Yeah.

DI Right,

DS Are you a member of a club Michael, are you?

MR Yeah, I'm a member of the Orkney Full Bore Society or Club or whatever.

DS So it's always 9mm that you shoot there, is it?

MR Well, eh, it's anything really you fire, .303 rifle and...

DS Right.

MR 7621's and 9mm and eh, 38 specials and stuff.

DS So you're quite keen on firearms, yeah?

MR Yeah.

DS Yeah, are you a good shot?

MR I'm a better shot with a rifle, but I'm not too bad with a pistol.

DS Are you right or left handed?

MR Right handed.

DI Can we go back to this thing in, when you say you were waiting in Papdale woods, I find it, very hard to believe that it was █████ you were waiting for considering that, the hassle that he had with █████... eh, █████, is about a month before you were waiting for him, is it?

MR Yeah, but I had heard that eh, well I had been told by █████ herself, that she had been getting smacks, like, no a serious beating up like, but just maybe a punch or slapping, stuff like that, every now and again from him, and that kept me getting madder and stuff.

DI So when you first shoo... were shown the bruises that she got in school, you didn't go then, but it was after that when you heard about more slaps and punches, she'd been getting?

MR Yeah.

DI I find that hard to believe as well.

DS It's not what you told us last time, Michael.

MR Yeah, I know but I just forgot about it.

DS You told us the last time, after you were shown the bruises by [REDACTED], you were mad about that, eh, that's when you went to Papdale, that's when you decided to give [REDACTED] a doing over, as you put it.

MR No, I did..., I didn't mean that it was straight after I had seen the bruises.

DI Mmhm.

MR Like I, eh, heard about it.

DI So, why, why wait, why wait at all, if you were that mad after seeing, after seeing these bruises?

MR I dunno, it's just not really wanting to do to him.

DI What made you do it at the end of the day then?

MR Eh, well I heard about him doing it a couple of more times, like, eh punching and slapping her and stuff, and I just got mad and went into the woods.

DI So did somebody, did she tell you that she had been punched and slapped, just before you went into the woods then, is that what you're saying?

MR No, like eh, maybe a day or so, before hand.

DI So she got a good slap, the day before, the day or so before, and that made you do it.

MR Yeah.

DI Why did you not mention that before?

MR I dunno, I just forgot about it.

DI Forgot about it.

MR Mm.

DI You've only come up with that Michael, since it's been pointed out to you that you waited about 4 weeks that you went into Papdale, you've never mentioned it before now, you've never come up with that, but when you've been asked why you've waited you've come up with this reason. Is it not the case you were in Papdale Woods for some other reason?

MR No that's how I was there.

DI Not really normal behaviour to dress up like that to go and wait, why, why not just give him a hiding on the street, at school or wherever.

MR I just thought someone might see me, and eh, I'd get done for assault or something.

DI So that's why you are wearing the stuff, so you wouldn't be seen and wouldn't be known?

MR Yeah.

DI Bit dramatic through, isn't it?

MR Yeah, I suppose.

DI Stalking from tree to tree, was even more dramatic, what's behind that, are you trained to do that?

MR No, if I was trying to go from one piece to another I'd be crawling on my chest, but....

DI You didn't want to dirty your trousers, I think you said last time was it?

MR Yes, I wasn't really bothered about not being seen or nothing, like, just as a figure moving about.

DI So why weren't you bothered about not being seen?

MR Well, just, like, folk would, if he had come folk would have seen me fighting with him likely.

DI But there was no danger of him coming, 'cause he wasn't there.

MR Well I thought he was.

DI And do you not think all these people passing by, seeing you in the wood would think it a bit strange?

MR Yeah, they probably would, but...

DI Do you not think they would report it to the police, there's a strange man in there with a balaclava?

MR Yeah, I thought they might do, but I just, wasn't really bothered, I just,

DI Why not?

MR I was just wanting to get him, that's all.

DI That you were wanting to get him no matter what.

MR Yeah, I suppose.

DI And then when he doesn't come, you just say, Och, I'll no bother now then, bit strange that too, isn't it?

MR Yeah I suppose, but, eh, bit of hassle doing that.

DI Mmhm.

MR But of hassle doing all that stuff, and waiting for him and everything, so.

DI Yes, but you obviously were upset enough to go to that lengths, for the bit of hassle, the first time.

MR Yeah, I know, but eh, I realised that, just not to bother.

DI Why, what made you change your mind then?

MR Nothing, just all the hassle, that I would have to go to, eh, like eh, in case I got caught for doing it and.

DI I just find all that very strange and peculiar, not normal, is it?

MR Mmhm.

DI Usually if kids fall out at school, they just give each other a punch and that's it. They don't usually go hanging about in woods with balaclavas on.

DS It's not only a balaclava, though Michael, you changed your clothes, you know, you've got different clothes on, you took that clothes with you, you'd obviously planned it, you know, you put a bit of thought into it, hadn't you?

MR Yeah

DS You know, you changed your clothes, so that when you did, eh, aft... if something had happened, afterwards you could change back into different clothes, isn't that right?

MR Yeah

DS So nobody could see you, yeah, you'd thought that through, had you, so that's why you'd took different clothing, so if you, if you did see [REDACTED], and something happened there, that you'd be able to change right after and nobody would know.

MR Yeah, well party that, and in case I got blood on my clothes and...

DS Yeah.

MR ... my mum would be asking and stuff.

DI So why was it your mum got rid of that, tee-shirt, or the hooded top you'd been wearing that day?

MR Eh, I, I hardly ever wore it at all, so just thought it would be something extra to put, to put to the jumble sale.

DI So you know what jumble sale it was?

MR It was one in Finstown anyway, but eh, I don't know what, if it had a name, or,

DI Did you give it to her to put in, or did she just put it in herself?

MR Yeah I think so.

DI What, which one?

MR Eh, she just eh, must have taken it out of the drawers.

DS She didn't come asking you for any, anything old that you didn't use, that you had for a jumble sale, no?

MR No

DS No

DI What do you think of Asian's yourself, what's your views on them?

MR I don't know, never really thought about them.

DI Mhm.

MR Never really thought about them, not too bothered about them I suppose.

DI Have you ever spoken to any of the one's down here?

MR No I've hardly ever seen any of them, seen eh, like there's a couple of folk in school that are, Asian coloured.

DI How do you get on with them?

MR They're not really in my year so, I never talk to them.

DI Mhm, so you've never spoken to any of the waiters in the restaurant.

MR Nuh, never seen any of them before.

DI Mhm, who are all your girlfriends. Could you detail your girlfriend for me again?

MR There's eh, well, all me ex ones there's eh, [REDACTED], and eh.

DI How do you get on with her now?

MR Eh, dead right mates and that.

DI Did she have any problem with Asians?

MR I don't think so.

DI No.

MR And eh, [REDACTED], and eh, [REDACTED], and there less I'm going wi' just now, eh, [REDACTED], I've not been going with her for very long.

DI And when did you start going out with her?

MR Eh, last, eh about a week ago I think, or so.

DI Where all have you been with her, have you taken her out at nights, or,

MR No, never been out with her at night, no.

DI No.

DS So what, do you just see her at school or?

MR Yeah, see her at school, at the school.

DI Mmhm, so is that all the girlfriends you've had?

MR Yeah.

DI Where is she from, [REDACTED] or whatever?

MR I don't know. I don't know where she lives, I've got her phone number here.

DI Aye, do you give her a ring at the house sometimes?

MR Yeah sometimes.

DI Do you ever go out to see her?

MR No I don't ken where she lives?

DI Mmhm.

DS When you say you go out with her where have you been, like, have you been anywhere at, say at lunchtime, eh you don't...

MR Well, I've only, eh been with her once like, in, that was eh, well she wanted to speak to me one lunch time, that was just at school, like, and I was just talking to her there.

DS So when you say you're going out with her, how does it, how does she know you're going out with her, like?

MR Well she asked me, like.

DS Oh, she asked you?

MR Yeah.

DS Right, wasn't the other way around, no.

MR No

DS But you've never actually gone anywhere or,

MR No

DS So do you see her every lunchtime, or,

MR Well not seen her the day or yesterday, like, but I see her most lunchtimes, but don't really have much time to stop and talk to her, like.

DS How are you usually with your mates, like?

MR Yeah, well, like I usually come in late for lunch, anyway, so if I see her I'll just be going past her, and I'll say "Hi" and that.

DI What is it that you do for lunch in school?

MR Eh, I just go down the street to, eh, Cumming and Spence's and get rolls and that.

DI Mmhm.

(PAUSE)

DI Right this argument with eh, [REDACTED], what have we now decided that's about?

MR Eh, well I never really liked him anyway, so I just punched him.

DI Aye, we know that, but why?

MR Well, eh, I heard a rumour that he, he had been eh, trying to, had drugs or something like that with him, eh, poppers of something like that, and eh, one weekend, and eh, I don't know if it was true or not, but I don't really like folk that do drugs and stuff and it's just a right pain in the backside and stuff.

DI That's another reason for you doing it, then?

MR Mmhm.

DI That's a different one again is it. Because he takes drugs now is it?

MR Yeah I suppose.

DI Well, that's, eh what is it, you were saying it's because he didn't obey orders to start with, but when we pointed out that it wasn't the case.

MR Yeah, he didn't either, but, likes he was being disobedient that night, so, that wasn't really my main reason for punching him, but, that's,

DI What was the main reason then?

MR Eh, well, I just don't really like him, at all.

DI But you'd have to have a reason for just punching him, wouldn't you?

MR Yeah, well.

DI What was it?

MR Well that's it, I've just, I don't like him, and,

DI So anybody you don't like you're just liable to go up and punch?

MR Not really, it's just, I was particularly annoyed with him that night, so,

DS Had you been wound up that night, like?

MR Aye.

DS Yeah.

MR He was getting a bit annoying.

DS Do you get wound up quite easily, like.

MR Well, not really, just.

DS No.

MR Well sometimes, if, I'm being really annoyed, but not usually punch folk or stuff.

DI Did you get wound up with [REDACTED], one night?

MR Aye, but that, that was just, like a, like a tiff, just.

DI A tiff?

MR Aye.

DI Did you not have him by the throat, up against the wall?

MR Yeah, well I was just playing.

DI eh?

MR Just a sort of, I was being daft and,

DS Did he think you were playing?

MR I dunno, might of done, we're still mates like.

Chisholm is referring to an evening at cadets when Michael pinned his friend up against the wall. One of the younger cadets (aged 12) gave the following statement about this incident:

"I go to the cadets almost every Wednesday night and that's usually where I see [REDACTED] and Michael ROSS. I would say for about the last six months I have been bullied by [REDACTED] on and off. It has been getting worse at the extent that he has been punching and kicking me in the back. I have not hit him back and I have not told on him. Most of the cadets have seen [REDACTED] hitting me but have done nothing to stop it. I do know that [REDACTED] has seen what has been happening and that she has told Michael ROSS. I think she told Michael about it because of his rank, and that they are good friends.

About the first Wednesday in November 1994 (001194) either the 2nd or the 9th (021194 or 091194), I can't remember which, I was at the cadets when I saw Michael ROSS grab [REDACTED] by the collar. I heard Michael shouting at [REDACTED] saying that he had been getting news about all the bullying that had been going on at the cadets and this had caused cadets to leave. He, Michael, was talking in general terms and did not mention any names. I then turned round to speak to a friend and when I turned round again I saw Michael ROSS punching [REDACTED] in the ribs. I don't know if [REDACTED] hit Michael or not. After that they both separated and as [REDACTED] was walking away he said 'stupid wanker' or something like that. This incident happened about 8.30 pm (2030) during the break in the canteen. I don't think Michael ROSS heard [REDACTED] call him a stupid wanker or he would have spoken to him about it. That's all that happened between them.

Since the incident with Michael ROSS, [REDACTED] has been keeping out of my way at the cadets, however, at the last meeting before Christmas, Wednesday, 21 December 1994 (211294), [REDACTED] did try and hit me with a snooker cue. That's all I can really tell you. I haven't really spoken to Michael ROSS since the incident between him and [REDACTED]. I think that's the only time I have seen Michael ROSS fly off the handle at the cadets."

(PAUSE)

DI When did you finish going out with [REDACTED]?

MR Em, two, or three days before the exams I think, started, like, it was round that time.

DI When's the exams then?

MR I dunno, I can't remember, it was a couple of days before the exams that she dumped me, anyway, so.

DI You told us the first time we spoke to you, that, she finished, or you finished with her about two or three weeks eh, before the incident, in the Papdale Woods.

MR Did I?

DI According to her she finished with you, about January of this year.

MR Aye that would have been about it.

DI Aha?

DS What exams did you have in January, Michael?

MR January, eh.

DS You wouldn't have exams then would you?

MR I dunno, there just starting around that time, don't know if it was in January like, might have been February that they started, round the start of this, this year that I finished with her.

DI Right something I definitely need to get cleared up is, when you were up in the woods in Papdale, that time, the only time you were there, there was definitely a wooden box, you had a wooden box with you, we need to know what was in that.

MR I never had a wooden box, that's.

DI People passing, you know there was a lot of people passing and saw you there.

MR Yeah, I know, but.

DI Some of them saw a wooden box.

Only one of the woods witnesses referred to a wooden box. A 10 year old boy in his second statement on 18 August 1994, 3 months after seeing Michael in Papdale Woods.

MR Must have been seeing a bit of wood lying about.

DI No it wasn't a bit of wood, no, it was polished. It was a wooden box.

MR Well I never, well I never, definitely have a wooden box with me. All I had was like, what I said, and the rucksack and that.

DI Right, what was in the rucksack, then, did you have a wooden box in the rucksack, then?

MR Nah, it was empty after I put the balaclava and that on.

DI So what all was in it?

MR Eh, just a balaclava and that eh, tracksuit top.

DI And a wooden box?

MR No, never had a wooden box wae me.

DS So why would somebody describe seeing a wooden box, Michael?

DI They can describe it fairly well, too, I mean they've seen it, they're not in any doubt that they've seen it.

The 10 year old witness gave an initial statement on 16 June 1994, stating that he'd seen someone in Papdale Woods on the date in question:

"On a Thursday afternoon about 4 weeks ago I was walking home from school with [REDACTED]. We walk up past the Papdale Woods. As we went past the woods I saw a man sitting down behind the wall at the side of the path. He had a hood up and a mask but I can't remember anything else about him."

His follow up statement on 18 August gave much more detail and said:

"I looked over, and saw a youth sitting down on the ground with his back to the wall. I noticed he was wearing a black woollen balaclava. He also had a dark (blue or black) sweatshirt with a hood. The hood was up covering his hair. I think he was wearing jeans. He had white trainers on. There was green/blue bits on them. He had a white carrier bag with him which was on the ground near to him. The bag looked if it contained a piece of wood/case. The surface was lightish with grainy bits on it. I would say that they man was tall, maybe 6', thin build. I think, by his build, and what he was wearing, he would have been in his late teens/early twenties. The balaclava only had a mouth-piece. I can't remember seeing any eye holes. As we were approaching him, we saw the male looking slowly right and left. When he saw us he didn't seem concerned. He still sat where he was. He didn't say anything to us. We didn't say anything to him. [REDACTED] and myself just carried on up the road."

MR I dunno, I had a belt on, they might have this flash of light.

DI What sort of belt?

MR Eh, it was just a, eh, think black belt with a silvery buckle.

DI Mm, wouldn't have been that then, eh?

MR I wouldn't think it, but, that's the only thing I could think of that might shine some light or something, 'cause I definitely didn't have a wooden box wae me.

DI See, when you went, you were waiting there for [REDACTED].

MR Mmhm.

DI To fight for, for [REDACTED], if you like, did you tell [REDACTED], about that.

MR I never told her about, that I was in the woods like, but I telt her later on that I was thinking o' going to give him a hiding and that, but didn't tell her I was in the woods.

DI Why not?

MR I dunno, I just thought it was best not to tell her.

DI Why?

MR Just.

DI It was for her you were doing it, wasn't it?

MR Yeah, I suppose but,

DI Do you not think she'd have been impressed?

MR Not really, 'cause like her and [REDACTED] are mates as well like, and she usually starts crying and stuff when he gets some fights.

DI Who?

MR Her and [REDACTED], she usually starts crying if he gets in a fight, and that. So I just thought it would be best not to tell her, case she got upset about it.

DI I just find it incredible, that you haven't gone and done anything about it again, then, just och well, it's important enough to go and get dressed up and go in the woods to do something about weeks after it happened, and then you just decide I'll no bother doing anything now, that, that doesn't strike me as being very sensible.

MR Yeah, I know, but I couldn't be bothered doing it after that.

DI Eh?

MR Couldn't be bothered doing it after that.

DI Oh, you couldn't be bothered doing it?

MR Yeah.

DI So why could you be bothered doing it anyway?

MR I dunno, I was just in the mood for getting in a fight with him.

DI So do you have certain times when you are in the mood for fighting?

MR Well, just depends, I usually have to be quite worked up, and that.

DI But you're no gonna be worked up after a month?

MR Yeah I know, but,

DS So what gets you worked up Michael?

MR Just, like eh, folk annoying me.

DS Like, that was a day after army cadets, like do you get wound up at cadets, like, does?

MR Well I get wound up sometimes, like, with cleaning and that, but.

DS So do you usually feel wound up the day after cadets, eh?

MR Not really.

DS No.

MR Usually I'm relaxed and that after.

DS Yeah.

DI What is it you intend to do when you leave school?

MR I want to join the army.

DI Join the army eh. When do you intend doing that?

MR Eh, I was planning on getting a interview for it, maybe after Christmas, about, and seeing if I could get in afore the summer holidays.

DS Keen on the army Michael, eh?

MR Yeah.

DS Got a regiment in mind? Which one?

MR Black Watch.

DI Is that what your father was in?

MR Yeah.

DI So this, what I have in this statement here, second statement we got from you, or the third I think it is. The one where you saying you gave [REDACTED]... [REDACTED] (coughs) a punch for disobeying orders, it wasn't really because you, he was disobeying orders then?

MR Well, not really, but, just started, well, just sort of really set me of sort of, likes. Like, eh, I already hated him, like and.

DI Why do you hate him?

MR Eh, just, like I told you.

DI The drugs thing?

MR Aye.

DI Have you seen him with drugs?

MR No, I've no seen him with drugs, like but he just looks that sort, like that sort of person, always gonna about wi eh, minging sort o' claes on and stuff.

DI Why pick that night to punch him though?

MR I dunno, it was just, well I wasna really thinking about it, and eh, he just set me off that night, and just I was in the mood for it, and, gid past him so I just belted him, that's it.

DI Did you go after him to do it or did you just happen to be passing him?

MR Yeah, well, like I was gonna walk home that night, like and decided not to, like I was gonna catch the mini bus and get that home.

DI So who was driving the minibus?

MR Eh, me dad.

DI Right.

MR And eh, like eh, he was just coming down the path, and I was just walking back up to get the minibus and just seen him and just thought well punch him

DI And had your brother tried to punch him just before that?

MR He'd tried to punch him after that, I think.

DI After that, so it was a family affair, that night?

MR Well I wasna really bothered about him being away wae [REDACTED] and that, but Colin was.

DI How had he being going wae [REDACTED] as well?

MR Aye.

DI So was it to support your bother, you were doing it then?

MR I suppose it could be, but that wasn't really my main reason, like.

DI Just you don't like him anyway, eh.

(PAUSE)

DI Right the day you went away on the bike, on the second and you took this rucksack with you, with the anorak, that wouldn't be your norm' to take a rucksack and anorak, when you go out for a cycle run, is it?

MR Well just depends, if, well I usually take it most days, like.

DI Most days?

MR Aye, well.

DI I can understand it now, with this weather.

MR Yeah I know but,

DI But not in the middle of June, or early June.

MR I dunno, it's like, I usually take it sometimes, just in case it does rain or whatever, or in case I get cold or,

DI You'll no get cold on the second of June.

MR Yeah I know, but,

DI Eh?

MR Just just for the rain and that, usually take it about sometimes.

DI That's not the one you usually take about though is it, it's usually your Head bag you take about, isn't it?

MR No, it's well, like sometimes I take my Head bag and sometimes I'll just take the green one.

DI Is the green one not more for when you're out in the army stuff?

MR Yeah, I suppose but, I just take it now and again, 'cause it's nice and small size, so.

DS So when it's at home, what do you keep in it?

MR Eh?

DS Just your army cadet stuff and that is it?

MR Well, nah I just leave it lying empty.

DI You'd have a job fitting that big black and orange anorak into that.

MR Not really, 'cause it's got a big mouth, eh opening piece, for putting it in.

(PAUSE)

DI What time is it?

DS Twenty to eight.

DS So where do you keep all your army cadet stuff at home?

MR Well I've got eh, all my uniform and stuff eh hanging up in eh, coat hangers, eh in a cupboard and got all spare rations en' eh, bits of, eh bits of kit and gloves and stuff like that I think.

DS So keep your gloves with the kit, yeah.

MR Yeah, just.

DS This your black gloves you told us about earlier, Michael?

MR Aye, well, there in another green bag that I've got.

DS What a green rucksack?

MR Aye.

DS And what do you keep in the rucksack with the gloves?

MR Eh, just eh, well I've got a hat and stuff like that, I think.

DS How do you mean a hat, what type of hat?

MR It's a cam... peerie camouflage thing, for putting grass in for doing camouflage scene...

DS So you keep all that stuff together in that wee rucksack?

MR Aye, and I've got another camouflage bag, that's got eh, all spare rations and stuff.

DI So what is it you use your other bag for, the big bag?

MR Eh, what the big camouflage one?

DI No the Head bag.

MR Oh, I just use that for taking eh, English folder and stuff like that to school, for carrying it about in.

(PAUSE)

DI When you were on study leave, do you know when that was from, when did you start study leave?

MR Em, it would be around that January, February time, or maybe no that was for prelims, I think then, em it would be about that June, May time.

DI And what did you do most of the time, when you were on study leave?

MR Well most of the time I just sat at home and watched TV, didna bother studying, like, but, just stayed home or gid for walks in the hills and that.

DI Were you in town much?

MR I was in once or twice but, not too often like, I was in two or three nights, a couple of times during the day, and that.

(PAUSE)

DI Right I think that'll do for this tape, we'll do a bit more research, and see what else we've got. I think we'll conclude this tape meantime. The time is now 1645 on 6th of December 1994. This is Detective Inspector Chisholm concluding this part of the interview with Michael Alexander Ross, which took place at the interview room in the Police Station at Kirkwall.

DS Okay, Michael, I'm just going to turn the tapes off, Okay.

MR Yeah.

After this interview, these two officers took further statements

First alibi witness, 6 December 1994:

"On Thursday, 2nd June, 1994 (020694) I was on a school Geology trip which was part of our three day activity programme. We finished the trip and were out of school about 1515 hours. I walked home and got into my house about 1535 hours. After doing my homework I went out about 1550 hours and went up to [REDACTED] house at [REDACTED].

I had previously arranged with [REDACTED] to call for him after I finished school as I was to help him cut the grass at [REDACTED] house which is [REDACTED]. That is just beside [REDACTED] house. [REDACTED] got out his petrol lawnmower and we walked down towards [REDACTED] house, on our way down I nipped into my own house to tell my mother where I would be. When I went back out [REDACTED] was in [REDACTED] garden and was standing talking to her. I joined him and we started to cut the grass. I forgot to say that [REDACTED] also took down an electric strimmer to [REDACTED]. We started cutting the grass and the time just have been about 1610 hours. [REDACTED] was using the lawnmower while I used the strimmer. We also used a pair of long handled shears which we got from [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] also gave us a scythe to use. The grass was quite long and it took us till about 1645 to cut it all. That's both the front and back. After that we tidied up the cut grass and finished about 1650/1655 hours.

After we finished the grass I helped [REDACTED] take the mower and strimmer back to his house. I stayed at his place for a short time playing computer and went back home about 1730 hours for my tea. After my tea I went back up to [REDACTED] and the rest of my movements were as I have told you before. It was only [REDACTED] and I that were cutting the grass and I don't recall speaking to anybody. I cannot recall speaking to [REDACTED] when we were cutting the grass as I previously said the only time I saw [REDACTED] that day was when she came down to my house later in the evening to borrow a computer game. It was definitely before my tea that I was cutting the grass and I don't recall seeing anybody at that time.

As I have told you before I never saw Michael ROSS that night and I never saw him while I was cutting the grass."

As can be seen, the account of the boy alibi witness is now extremely detailed with exact timings for the cutting of the grass in the Eastabist area.

Second alibi witness, 6 December 1994:

"I got home from school about 1510. When I got home I went over to [REDACTED] at Ronaldsvoe (now lives in Yeovil). I took her 6 month old baby out for a walk. The baby was in a pram and I just took her for a walk to the Papdale Park which is just across from [REDACTED] house. I got back home at about 1630 hours. When I came back I saw [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] cutting [REDACTED] grass. I did not go over to speak to them and do not know how much they had cut by then. I cannot be sure when they finished cutting the grass but I think it was about 5 pm (1900 hours). The rest is just as I told you in my previous statements. I am quite sure that I did not pass Michael ROSS at any time that afternoon while I was out with the pram and I am still quite sure I did not see him in the scheme later on that night."

The girl witness is now also able to provide exact timings for the grass cutting, although she had never mentioned this at all in either of her previous two statements.

The person that had cut the grass with the boy alibi witness gave the following statement on 7 December 1994, the day after this interview:

"I am presently unemployed, however, I do odd jobs which consist of grass cutting, window cleaning and garden jobs. Sometimes at these jobs I am helped by [REDACTED] who also stays in [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] is still at school and only helps me after school or on holidays. I cut grass at various houses one of which is [REDACTED] who stays somewhere in [REDACTED]. I normally cut her grass every two weeks but I have no set pattern of days etc."

This witness was interviewed again on 4 January 1995 and confirmed, as Michael had suggested, that he did wear combat clothing when he went out cutting grass. He said:

"As I previously said I cannot recall my movements during the daytime on Thursday, 2 June 1994 (020694). When I am out cutting grass I normally wear my green combat jacket and trousers. I cannot recall if I was cutting grass on the day of the murder or not. I do not know a boy called Michael ROSS."