

New South Wales Police

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STATEMENT in the matter of:
Monsignor Patrick Daniel COTTER

Place: Newcastle
Police Station
Date : 13 January 1997

Name: CNH
Address: [REDACTED] Tel. No.: [REDACTED]
Occupation: [REDACTED] STATES:-

1. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence which I would be prepared, if necessary, to give in court as a witness. The statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

2. I am 31 years of age.

3. I am a married mother of three children, [REDACTED] who is [REDACTED] [REDACTED], my husband is [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and I live with my family in the Newcastle area. I have grown up in the Newcastle area all my life and I went to school at Newcastle High School. I was born on [REDACTED]-1965.

4. On Wednesday 8 January, 1997 I received a telephone call from Senior Constable GRANT from the Major Crime Squad at Newcastle. He was making inquiries into Father Vincent RYAN and later spoke to my husband. My husband went into the Newcastle Police Station to make a statement to the Police and when he came home we had a conversation and I then contacted Senior Constable GRANT.

5. I wish to state a record of conversations I had with members of the Catholic Church in Newcastle in 1991. I was married to [REDACTED] on the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] after meeting him when I was around 16 years of age. [REDACTED] is a nice quiet man without an

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enemy in the world, he is a terrific husband and everybody loves him when they meet him.

6. I cannot remember the exact date or time but I remember a time in 1990 my husband had a conversation with me about Father Vincent RYAN. We were at our home at the time at REDACTED REDACTED when there was some news item about a sale of a Catholic church in the Cessnock area. Father RYAN was either in the paper or on TV when REDACTED said, something similar to, "He used to be the Priest at St Joeys at Merewether, he used to interfere with boys."

I said, "Oh."

He said, "He tried it on me."

I was shocked at what I heard I needed to know more,

I said, "Well what did he do."

He said, "Just fondelling and rubbing himself."

I said, "Did he make you do anything to him?"

He said, "No but he made Gerard McDONALD suck him until the green stuff came out."

I remember seeing this horrific look on REDACTED face when he said it,

I said, "Were you there?"

He said, "Yes there was a couple of others there?"

I questioned him about why he didn't tell his parents or anyone,

He said, "They wouldn't have believed me."

I was extremely upset and shocked at what I had heard. I am not a Catholic and I was mad at what I heard. I couldn't understand why he didn't want to report the matter to Police and I tried to convince him to do so.

7. We just sort of continued with our lives and we periodically mentioned the subject without really talking about it. It sort of

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festered with me, there was some press around about some Christian Brothers and things and this is when we would raise the subject. I stewed about it for a while and then I decided to do something about it.

8. I remember this time we were selling our house my [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was around [REDACTED] months old which makes to time period around April to May, 1991. I remember this time because [REDACTED] was born on [REDACTED] 1990 and the day I made the phone calls the Real Estate Man had trouble ringing me to bring people to see the house and he couldn't reach me on the telephone.

9. The first call I made was to Father RYAN himself, I telephoned him during the day around lunchtime on either a Tuesday or Thursday when my other son [REDACTED] was at [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was asleep at the time. I got the telephone number for the Cessnock Presbytery from the telephone book. I cannot remember the exact conversation but it was something similar to, a male answered the phone,

He said, "Cessnock Parish."

I said, "Can I speak to Vince RYAN please."

He said, "Speaking."

I said, "I know who you are and what you do to little boys and don't deny it you've done it to my husband and to other boys."

He said, "Yes but I've stopped I've had help I went to Melbourne its alright now."

I said, "Well I've told the Police about you and I'm watching you and if you so ever touch another child I'll come down on you like a ton of bricks."

I recall him being so quiet I was shocked he admitted it to me, I thought to myself everybody must know about it and it must have

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been over or something.

10. I can't remember exactly what I said but I told him he had ruined so many lives and that I hated him and I hoped he rotted in hell. He stayed really quiet and he said,
 He said, "All I can say is I'm sorry."

I thought that was a really pitiful thing to say. The conversation seems short but it went on for a little while. I finished the conversation saying,

"I hate you."

I then hung up.

11. I immediately telephoned the Bishops office at the office in the phone book which was in Maitland. I rang and a female answered the phone,

I said, "Can I speak to whoever is in charge please."

She said, "Who's speaking."

I said, "Its a personal matter."

I was put on hold and then

She said, "I'll put you through to Monsignor COTTER."

I then heard a male voice on the phone I remember this voice sounding quiet old and whispery.

He said, "Hello."

I said, "Are you aware that Father RYAN is molesting boys."

I heard a gasp and a slight delay, it was not a gasp of surprise but a gasp of disbelief that I had rang.

He said, "Yes we are aware he has been to Melbourne to get Psychiatric help."

He sounded calm and I couldn't believe that he knew, I thought OH my GOD I felt like I was talking to a brick wall,

I said, "He is still a Priest what are you going to do about it?"

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He said, "He's not doing any of it anymore."

I said, "How hypocritical he stands up there every Sunday preaching to people about the goodness of the world and he's a criminal."

He said, "We'll deal with it."

He then hung up and ended the telephone call. I tried to speak to him again over a couple of calls and I wasn't allowed to speak to Monsignor COTTER again. I got really mad then and I decided to telephone the Police.

12. I then telephoned Cessnock Police Station and spoke to a young sounding officer who I believe his name was 'Tony' but I cannot be 100% sure.

I said, "There's a Priest in the Catholic Church Vince RYAN and I believe he may be molesting boys."

He said, "Well how do you know?"

I said, "He was a Priest at my husband school twenty years ago and I know my husband wasn't the only one."

He said, "We'd really like to talk to your husband."

I said, "That's why I calling you my husband won't come forward."

The conversation was the officer trying to persuade me to get REDACTED to come forward as it was the only way they could do anything about it. I gave him an anonymous name of Sally to speak to me by and I spoke to him around ten minutes. I finished the call and sat down and had a good cry. I knew there was nothing I could do without REDACTED coming forward I felt helpless.

13. A few days to a week later I told my husband that I had made the calls and he didn't seemed surprised but didn't want to come forward. He just seemed happy that I had called and he sort of waited for someone else to come forward.

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14. It wasn't until late in 1995 that I saw and read in the news that he had been caught for the same offences. I then followed the case with great interest and was appalled at the result. REDACTED and I talked about his matter during this time and I tried to encourage him to come forward but he shied away from the subject. I didn't want to upset him at all so I let it lie.

15. I am pleased that Vince RYAN has finally been brought to justice for what he did to those poor guys who were his victims. I hope he gets what he deserves and that the victims get some Justice.

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