

New South Wales Police

P.190

v2.5

STATEMENT in the matter of:
 Father Vincent Gerard RYAN

Place: Newcastle
 Police Station
 Date : 14 January 1997

Name: CNA

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 57 [REDACTED] years of age.

3. I am married mother of [REDACTED] children all of whom have grown up and live away from home. I live at Merewether with my husband and we are both retired. My children [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I have [REDACTED] grandchildren as well.

4. In 1974, I was living with my family at [REDACTED] Merewether, my husband was working at [REDACTED] at the time [REDACTED]. I stayed in Merewether and looked after the children who attended St Josephs Catholic Primary school at the Junction. In 1974 my children [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were in fourth and second class at St Josephs, the school is attached to the St Josephs Catholic Church and the Priests from the Church used to have a bit to do with the school.

5. I remember in 1974 there were two Priests with St Josephs being Father COTTER and Father RYAN. I remember during this time

CNA

Witness: [REDACTED]

Signature: -

STATEMENT (continued) in the matter of: Father Vincent Gerard RYAN
Name: CNA

Father RYAN would often play with all children who were waiting for busses or parents after school, piggybacking children and playing chasies and things like that. In 1974 I used to REDACTED REDACTED on a voluntary basis either after school or on a Saturday morning whenever I had time. I remember on one particular occasion I was REDACTED and I had my REDAC sons with me. Whilst I was working they were playing in the school, running through the corridors and around the school grounds. After I had finished my work I took the boys home and went about my normal routine with dinner and looking after my family.

6. I'm not sure whether it was that night or a night or two after that Saturday, I was putting my youngest son REDACTED whom I call RED to bed. I remember nursing him and talking to him, he was around six years old turning 7 in the REDACTED of that year. At this time as we were talking he said something which I cannot remember the exact words,

He said, "Father RYAN touched me on my dickie bird."

I felt shocked and probably felt disbelief and I asked him to repeat what he said,

He said, "Father RYAN touched me on my dickie bird when REDACTE and I were playing."

I questioned him about what he was saying asking him where REDACTE was at the time and things like that, and then I went into another bedroom, where REDACTE was in bed. I sat on the bed and spoke to him,

I said, "What happened while I was doing the REDACTED ?"

He looked embarrassed and sort of smiled, and he didn't say much. REDACT was a much more reserved child than REDACTED and he made a coy admission that Father RYAN had touched him as well. I cannot remember what was said.

REDACTED

CNA

Witness: _____

Signature: _____

Page No: 3

P.190A.

STATEMENT (continued) in the matter of: Father Vincent Gerard RYAN
Name: CNA

7. I then felt absolutely devastated. My husband who is not a Catholic had always said, "If anyone ever touched my kids I'd kill them." I thought about how I would tell my husband, a Priest of all things had touched my children and I didn't know how to tell him, I knew I would have to.

8. During the next week I went and spoke to a friend who was involved with the church and was a policeman to seek some advice. He told me certain things about how to handle the situation and he explained to me how to press charges and giving evidence and things like that. I was against the idea of my young sons having to give evidence in a witness box at court. He suggested that I speak to Father COTTER who was the Parish Priest at the time.

9. About a week later my husband returned from working in **REDACTED** **REDACTED**. I told him of what had happened while he was away and the advice I had been given. He then went with me to the Presbytery at St Josephs Church The Junction and we took the two boys who we left in the car. We went to the Presbytery Father COTTER was there and we spoke to him in a private room. I cannot remember the exact conversation but I spoke mainly and my husband remained calm and let me do the talking. Our conversation went something similar to,
I said, "I've got a complaint against Father Ryan, my two boys have said that he has touched them on their private parts."

I can remember looking at him the colour sort of drained from his face he had a look of anguish and shock on his face. He sat there and didn't say anything for a short time.

He said something similar to,

"I thought something like this....."

He stopped the conversation and then summonsed Father RYAN to come

REDACTED

CNA

Witness: _____

Signature: _____

STATEMENT (continued) in the matter of: Father Vincent Gerard RYAN

Name: CNA

down into the room. I can't remember how he summonsed him whether he rang him or paged him or even went up to get him but Father RYAN came into the room a short time later.

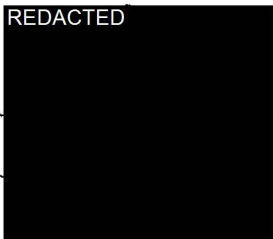
10. Father COTTER basically said something similar to, He said, "CNA has made a complaint against you." I said, "My two boys have said that you touched them on their private parts."

I said something else then but I cannot remember what I said, RYAN said, "They're just words."

I didn't say anything then but I thought to myself, 'So is the Catholic Church, so is Parish Priest. They're just words too'. I was expecting an apology or something and was surprised by Father RYAN's response.

He denied touching them so I offered to bring the boys in to put the allegation to him, both of them said that it wouldn't be necessary. I was at a bit of a loss with their reaction I knew in myself that I couldn't put my boys through Court and didn't think much else could be done. I was surprised at Father RYAN's reaction Father COTTER's reaction was one of shock but he believed me he was sort of dismayed. I thought to myself what can I do it is the word of two little boys against that of a Catholic Priest. Catholic Priests in 1974 were held in the highest esteem and trust by the community and their congregation, and here was one doing something like this. I didn't know what to do or where to turn to it was different in those days this subject wasn't freely spoken about like it is today. Basically the subject wasn't raised again and I have lost my faith in Priests in general. I have spoken to my two sons about the incident recently when Father RYAN was in the news and they have no real memory of the incident they remember Father RYAN and the games but not the actual assault.

Witness: _____ Signature: _____



CNA

Witness: _____ Signature: _____