

New South Wales Police

P.190

v2.6

STATEMENT in the matter of:  
 Father Vincent RYAN Merewether 1974

Place: Newcastle  
 Police Station  
 Date : 7 March 1996

Name: REDACTED

Address: 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 the second eldest child of REDACTED and I have grown up in the Merewether area all of my life. I used to live at REDACTED with my family that includes my elder sister REDACTE REDACTED. When I was growing up I attended St Joesphs Catholic Primary School at Merewether from Kindergarten through to year 5 before going to Sacred Heart Primary School at Hamilton.

4. I started school in 1969 in kindergarten, I never liked school at all and didn't ever do very good at school. I didn't like St Josephs at Merewether and was REDACTED

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5. When I was in fifth class my teacher was Sister Catherine Anne and the Principal of the school was Sister Margaret Anne.

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The school at Merewether is attached to St Josephs Catholic Church and when I was in fifth class I became an altar boy for the church. The Parish Priest was Monsignor COTTER and his assistant was Father RYAN. Father RYAN used to be the instructing Priest for altar boys.

6. With altar boy training we used to practise after school and we used to practise in the sacristy of St Josephs Catholic Church. REDACTED (DRAWS FLOORPLAN OF SACRISTY). This is where Father RYAN used to touch and fondle our private parts.

7. Inside the Sacristy it was like in two sections separated by a door and cupboards. It was possible if the door was open you could like circle inside the room. I remember that it was small and squashy room. Sometimes he would take us into the Presbytery and we would sit around a table. We would play up a fair bit and he would get mad at us. I remember we would ring the bells and pinch the altar wine and drink it.

8. I was an altar boy with REDACTED  
 REDACTED There were others but it is twenty two years ago and its hard to remember all of them. I didn't ever see anything happen to these boys but as a group we used to talk about Father RYAN and what he did to boys all the time.

9. I remember during practise I cannot remember the date but it was during 1974. I cannot remember exactly how the first incident started but I was sitting on a bench in the playground of St Josephs Primary school. I remember it being a lunchtime and I was sitting on the bench with some other people around. Father RYAN

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came up to us and sat down right next to me. I remember him being on my left. I can't remember what he said but he said something and then he reached to his right and put his hands on me and then pulled me onto his lap. I was sitting on his lap with my back to his front and I remember he pulled me into his waist. I remember that when he grabbed you there was no getting away from him.

10. I remember it was summer time because I was wearing my summer uniform which was grey shorts with a blue school shirt. In winter we wore long sleeve shirts with shorts. I remember this incident as plain as day. As I was sitting on his lap I was pulled into Father RYAN'S waist lap area I felt what I believe to be his hand come from behind and then under my right leg. I then felt his hand and fingers go inside my shorts leg opening and then inside my underpants and onto my genitals. By this I mean he put his hand and fingers onto my penis and testicles.

11. I felt his hands and fingers on my private parts and he moved his fingers around and had my penis between his fingers and he was fondelling me. He did this for a short time even though it felt like forever. He had his hand in a position that he couldn't be seen to others like if he had his hand over the front of my crotch and into my shorts. He was whispering things to me his exact words I cannot remember but he said,  
He said, "Do you like that.....is it growing is it getting bigger?"

I cannot remember if I answered him and I can't remember what I was thinking at the time. I only knew that I didn't understand what was happening to me I never had anything like this happen to me. I felt strange. The incident stopped when he pulled his hand out of my shorts and then I would run. The whole time he had hold

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of me I would be struggling and trying to get away from him and as soon as he released hold of me I remember I just ran.

12. I remember smelling this strong aftershave or something on him and this incident happened to me I would say a couple of more times on the seat throughout 1974.

13. The next thing that I can remember was an incident happening in the sacristy just before the church service started. I remember that Father RYAN had a sign in the sacristy that said, 'Silence'. I remember that we weren't allowed to speak while that sign was there and while you were in the Sacristy. I remember that things used to start after we would talk and whisper amongst ourselves and 'act the goat', by this I mean muck up a bit.

14. I remember that when we did this Father RYAN would come in and get mad at us for talking and mucking up and then he would start to chase us around the sacristy. We would run and circle the inside of the sacristy. He would chase us into a cupboard where robes were kept hanging up. I can't remember exactly how but he would sort of herd us up or round us up like sheep into this cupboard.

15. When we were inside the cupboard there was only usually three or less of us in the room and he would close it and I thought he locked it or held it shut and then the door would open and then he would reach inside the cupboard and then hold me against the back wall of the cupboard and the robes were hanging down on me at the same time. I remember just thinking about getting out of the cupboard. He would hold me with one hand and then with the other reach down and put his hand up inside my shorts leg inside me

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underpants again and fondle my genitals. He would touched me the same way put my penis between his fingers and fondle my testicles and he was saying stuff but I can't remember what he said. Eventually he would let go and I ran out of the cupboard. By this time he was ready to go out and give the service. We would then go out and do our altar service. Looking back I can't believe he would do what he did to me and and then go out and preach the word of GOD to the congregation. This type of incident occurred pretty regularly before he gave a service. I can remember that this type of thing happened nearly every time I served as an altar boy.

16. I remember things happening after altar boy practice in the Sacristy, I cannot remember in details the events that took place but I remember him chasing me into the cupboard and fondelling me, he would also unzip his trousers and talk to me and when he fondled me he would ask if my penis was growing and if it felt good. I can't remember everything that happened to me and don't want to describe anything that I'm not sure of.

17. I remember after altar boy practise Father RYAN would drive us home. I remember distinctly the car he had it was a silver/grey metallic coloured Holden HQ sedan with four doors. The front was bucket seats and the back was bench seat. I remember the colour of his car so well as when I doing my apprenticeship I used to paint cars and I remember seeing many cars the same colour and I would remember Father RYAN driving me home in that car.

18. We also used to go on school picnic days to Boat Harbour over at Nelson Bay area. We would go over on a bus an Father RYAN was in the bus with us. I remember that Father RYAN pulled me onto

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his lap on the way over to Boat Harbour and fondled me the same way as he did on the bench seat. He put his hand up the inside of my shorts leg and fondled my penis and testicles with his hand under my underpants. I remember another incident when we were on the way home I was sitting on the bus and I looked towards the back and I saw Father RYAN standing up at the back and he was completely naked. I then saw him put a towel around his waist, I think he was getting dressed or something. Other people would have had to have seen it I couldn't believe he would be naked and getting dressed on a bus full of kids.

19. I can't remember who or what I said, but I think from memory that us boys used to talk amongst ourselves and we would always refer to Father RYAN as a 'Poofter' in our group and things like that.

20. The first person I told about what Father RYAN had done to me was my dad REDACTED towards the end of 1974 when I was getting close to getting moved from St Josephs. I was at home at REDACTED REDACTED laying on Dads bed while he was reading the newspaper and I would lay there with him and read the comics. I don't know why I said anything or what brought it on. I said, "There's a priest down there and he pulls you on the dick."

I don't know if Dad believed me or thought I was mucking around or something. I know Dad went off and spoke to some of my mates about it and then it wasn't spoke about again. It was different back then that sort of thing was unimaginable and wasn't spoken about like it is today.

21. My family used to go to church every Sunday and be christians

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these incidents and I haven't been into St Josephs church since 1974 even for my grandmothers funeral. This incident has scarred me that if I have kids there is no way that they will be going to near a church or a priest and let this sort of thing happen to them. I feel betrayed by him because he was a Priest who was supposed to represent good. He would fondle me and then go out and give a service to the church. I felt confused about this because I didn't understand then but he was a hypocrite in what he used to preach about.

22. I have tried to forget about the incident but it has always been in the back of my mind, I have always wondered if I would see him again and what I would do if I did. I feel Father RYAN should pay for what he did to me and receive justice he was my first sexual relationship which I think is sick and sad. I have had trouble starting relationships. I am not married and live at the moment I have a girlfriend. I wasn't an angel at school and I used to muck up a bit and was always getting into trouble but I didn't deserve to be interfered with by Father RYAN.

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