

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BYURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No. W.S. 1,749

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,749.

Witness

William Lynskey,
2, Ardagh Road,
Crumlin Road,
Dublin.

Identity.

Member of Fianna Éireann, Dublin,
1919-21.

Subject.

Carrying of messages for various members
of the Passionist Fathers to certain
leaders of the national movement in Dublin,
1919-21.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil.

File No .S. 1,861.

Form B S M 2

ORIGINAL

STATEMENT BY WILLIAM LYNKEY,
2 Ardagh Road, Crumlin Road, Dublin.

The following statements of experiences of mine are true, in every detail, as far as my memory serves me at the moment:-

During 1919, '20 & '21, I was employed as clerk in the Office of "The Cross", a monthly magazine published at Mount Argus by the Passionist Fathers. The Editor was a Rev. Father Columban Tyne, C.P. a native of Thurles, he and I worked together. He knew I was a member of the Fianna and often had long conversations about the events of the time. He often related to me events of his childhood, telling me of cases of hardship and ill-treatment to people employed by big Land-Owners down in his native county. A certain Brother Dennis (a lay Brother) was a constant visitor to our office, which was situated on the second corridor at the extreme Southern Back Wing of the Monastery. This Brother Dennis was a very ardent Irish-man, and was also a very great friend of Miss Mary Comerford, who had a Religious Stall at the Church door. During my Ordinary clerical work, I also was called upon to deliver letters by hand to addresses in various places, and in particular the following places remain vividly in my mind, because I went to these places constantly. These are:-

Gerald Croft's Shop in Camden Street.

The Misses O'Hanrahan's Shop, was on the N.C. Rd. rear the Mater Hospital end.

J. J. Walshe's postal Service, at the rear of his Shop in Blessington Street. I was always admitted, when the pair of eyes that looked through the letter box in the Hall-door recognised me. I have a faint recollection of the interior still.

Another house which I went to occasionally was on Drumcondra Road, also Sandford Road, Ranelagh and I think, St. Laurance Road, Clontarf. Each time I was given a letter to deliver I was instructed as to its importance and there was to be no delay in delivery. Other places which I can recall were a house in Upper Rathmines Road, one on Claremont Road, Sandymount, and Mrs. Andrew's Shop on Terenure Road. *Todd and I were friends he was on hunger strike at the time.*

On one occasion I was confronted by two plain clothes men while leaving Mount Argus, they were on the path leading to the Monastery, as I approached on my bicycle they stepped out, one on either side to pull me off my bike. I whipped off the steel pump and swung it across in front of me. I dont know how I got through but I managed to pass them.

I had often noticed these strangers about the wood at unusual times and mentioned it to Fr. Columban. There as also employed at Mount Argus as Yard man a certain Joe Brennan, also his brother Pat, as gardener. Joe was a member of 3rd Btn. He was afterwards Usher in An Dail. He died some years ago. I often see Pat still. He is a Dairyman. Now, it was Joe who warned me to watch out for these G.Men. About Aug. 1919, I went to serve my Apprenticeship as a Ship Plater and Boilermaker. A certain Paddy Mannion a close friend of mine, was at the business and got me a vacancy. Paddy, was an only child of Det. Inspector Mannion. His home was off Donore Ave. He often slept at my home. He was killed in an ambush during the Civil War. When I told Fr. Columban of my new job, he told me he would wish that I should come up after tea in the evening and do the clerical work. This I did, and during the Curfew period I often left the Office at Mount Argus after Curfew. My home at the time was, "Roymount Cottage", Kimmage Road. One night, fresh still in my memory, as I was leaving Mount Argus walking, I am approaching the little bridge over the River going towards Kimmage Road Gate, it was very dark, out of the stillness two shots rang and hit the ground at my feet, I nearly dropped dead with fright, and when I could, I ran for the path and down to Kimmage Road Gate Lane. I was often followed to my own gate, and on a couple of occasions was stopped on my way to the Monastery and questioned as to what brought me there and what I was doing up there at night. One night as I was going in through the Main Kimmage Road Gate, a limping fellow fell in beside me and started a conversation about the priests and asked me where I was going as there was nothing on. I saw him afterwards with plain clothes men. Sometime, during this time, I cannot remember actual dates, there was an unsuccessful attempt to blow up Sir Simon Maddock's House in Mount Jerome Cemetery.

The mine (a petrol tin) failed, due to the fuse, I think. His Manager, or Foreman, his name was Thomas Germaine, called to my home to tell me Sir Simon wanted to see me. I went up at the appointed time, it was night time I still remember the walk through the Cemetery in the dark. I did not guess what he wanted me for. I had never spoken to him in my life. However, up I went and he brought me into his Sittingroom, his wife was there and a great big dog sprawled on the carpet. I cannot recall his words, but before long I was to know what he wanted me for. He asked me where I worked and what I did at night, this in a very friendly way. The maid brought in tea and, I was shocked to hear how much he knew about me. He knew I went up to Mount Argus at night. He asked me did I know who put the mine in his porch. He mentioned several fellows names. I told him I could not guess who did it. His wife was there all the time. He was very eager to hear all about what I did at night in Mount Argus. I explained all my work was in the clerical work of the Magazine, "The Cross". I had known him as a recruiting Officer when the War was on. And that was enough for me. I believed after that, that the Touts and G. Men came through the Cemetery, across Hoey's fields and into Mount Argus woods, without touching the road leading to Mount Argus and thats how they melted away from the Monastery without being seen. There was a River Wall opposite my home on Kimmage Road, there is a little of it still there. One evening I came in from the Dublin Dockyard at about 6 o.c. I noticed a stranger smart looking fellow sitting on the wall opposite the house, I left my bike in the passage and my Mother let me in. When I was going up to Mount Argus about an hour or so later the same fellow was standing on the bridge near the Monastery when I passed by. On several occasions, I was told by Brother Dennis not to deliver the letters myself but to get my Sister to do so. She was younger than I, about 16 or 17 at the time. They knew her since childhood at Mount Argus. I often carried letters in the early morning on my way to the Dockyard. Some of these, I did know, were in connection with men on hunger strike and in Jail.

Fr. Joseph, C.P. was a constant visitor to them. The letters were confidential and needless to say, I ~~am~~ ^{was} unable to give any details regarding them which would, no doubt help my story. Often, I was not too

to deliver them when going

happy about going out of my way to work, I am sure, but I always carried out my job in hands, even if it meant being late for work. There are times now, when events come much more clearly to my mind and at the moment I feel this account lacks a good deal of detail, which may, in the future come back to my mind. I intend to make notes in the future and compile them as they occur to me. It will take time and when I am satisfied I shall send it along. I enclose an original letter written by Fr. Columban, referred to previously, when I was unemployed and seeking employment. I also enclose the original Fr. Joseph's letter. Both these letters have a high sentimental value and should they be of little value to you I would welcome their return.

I should have mentioned that I had the honour to have met any man of note at the time, who was a visitor to Mount Argus. I think it was Mr. De Valera lived in Claremont Road, this thought has just come to me as I write. I do know Mount Argus had a Student Class in Claremont House. This was a big house in from the road (Claremont Road). Mr. De Valera taught there at one time for the Passionist Fathers. You will have to pardon my poor attempt to recall my experiences at the time. I promise to make notes over a period in the future.

William T. Lynskey

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12/11/1951.

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