

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 356

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 356.....

Witness

Mr. Milo McGarry,
31 Upper Fitzwilliam St.,
Dublin.

Identity

Member of Irish Volunteers
Dublin, 1916.

Subject

- (a) Message from Pearse to Limerick Easter Monday, 1916;
- (b) Miscellaneous events of Easter Week 1916;
- (c) National events 1916-1921;
- (d) American Commission for Irish Independence - Visit to Ireland;
- (e) Peace Moves 1921.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. S. 654.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

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STATEMENT OF MR. MILO McGARRY,
31, Upper Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin.

On Easter Sunday, 1916, at about 4 p.m. Miss Perolz and Maebh Cavanagh arrived at 31 Fitzwilliam Street, and told us the Rising was to take place that night and we were to wait until we got a further message. The news of a Rising was a surprise. I asked was it Pearse and Connolly. They told me that there was a slight difficulty - a difference of opinion. They mentioned that Pearse, Connolly and McDermott were in it, and that there was a meeting in progress in Liberty Hall. They told me about Casement, that he had been arrested and was in Dublin, and would be rescued. I was satisfied when I heard these three were in it and that the girls had come from them. They told us that we were not to take any notice of any orders from anyone else. It was my mother they came to see. We were to do nothing until they came again; and they would bring a car when the final message was ready; the meeting was still in progress.

I was a member of the 3rd Battalion and I never expected anything of the kind, or suspected that a rising was at hand, though T. MacDonagh had given me a hint a short time before if I had been astute enough to take it in: "We'll have Dublin to ourselves next Sunday, so don't forget". All that day we waited indoors and, when midnight came, we decided that nothing would happen. I went out to see how the city

was. I saw nothing, and came in and went to bed and to sleep. About two o'clock my mother was just going to bed when she heard a knock at the door. She opened it and saw Marie Perolz and Charlie Power, who had come from Sean MacDiarmada. They gave her a written sealed despatch which we understood contained the words: "We strike at noon. Obey your orders". It was addressed to Colivet and signed by Pearse. They told my mother to take the 9 a.m. train to Limerick, and deliver it at John Daly's house. She was to come back, if possible, and say whether she could deliver it.

I accompanied her to the station for the 9 a.m. train, by outside car. We went to Limerick. I am positive it was not the 6.45 a.m. train. At Ballybrophy Junction I saw Marie Perolz in the Cork part of the train. We arrived in Limerick shortly after 1 p.m. We went to Daly's. Madge was there and old John. They told us that the Volunteers were in Killonan. They took charge of the message; and two of the sisters took it to Colivet immediately. We were told that O'Rahilly had come the previous morning with the countermanding order and that, as a consequence, the Volunteers had been demobilised. The Daly's were debating what could be done, as the confusion was great. As it seemed likely that we might be in Limerick for some time, they gave us the address of a working-class boarding house in Hartshorn Street. We went there and booked our rooms, and came back, say, about 3 p.m. Seán

Ó Muirthile had arrived in very bad humour. He said they were completely confused as a result of the different orders and he was very angry with Pearse. He told us that the Volunteers were in action in Dublin. He said: "Whom am I to take orders from?" He went out, but he did not go back to the camp. We had a meal and then went to the station to see was there any news. We saw a notice chalked up - "The usual 4 o'clock train running to-day". We made up our minds that the Rising had collapsed. We decided we would go back to Dublin. We went back to Daly's where we found Edward Dore. The two Miss Daly's, Dore, my mother and myself made up our minds to travel to Dublin independently and as if we did not know each other. The Daly's meant to go to Tom Clarke, and Eamon Dore with them. We would try to contact Seán McDermott, or someone else. We left the station in the train, but at Nenagh the train came to a full stop and we were all told to get out - "This train is going no further". An Englishman who was travelling said he would see the Company, as he would miss his boat connection. His voice was continuously heard above the commotion. We walked into the town and tried to get a car for Dublin. We had a long dispute with the railway official. There were many British military on the platform, returning from leave. The train returned to Limerick, and we all travelled in it.

When we arrived back at Daly's, Mr. McInerny, the driver of the car that fell into the Laune river

at Ballykissane Pier, was there. He was on the run and did not wish to stay in his own house. Quite a number of other people were there, including Volunteers, one of whom was Seán Ó Muirthile, with whom I shared a bed that night. The house was put into a state of siege. Mrs. Clarke's boys were there. Nothing happened.

There was no incident on Tuesday until 4 p.m., when the Dublin train ran again, and we all decided to travel by it - Ned Dore, Laura and Nora Daly, my mother and myself. We again agreed to act as strangers to each other. We reached Dublin very late; it might be near midnight. We did not know anything about events in Dublin till we got to the Curragh where we saw troops in war kit on the platform. At every station we came to, we thought we were going to be held up. When we arrived in Kingsbridge, the military were in possession. Before reaching Kingsbridge, it had been decided that the Daly's and Ned Dore would make their way to Tom Clarke's, round by Arbour Hill, Oxmantown Road and North Circular Road. The military shepherded us the same way, and we kept together till we reached Doyle's Corner.

My mother and I went to 11, Mountjoy Square where Diarmuid Lynch was staying - he was, of course, at this time in the G.P.O. - and there we remained parked until the following Monday morning. Owing to the cordon encircling the city, we could not get out, though

on Saturday we got as far as Findlater's Church. Mrs. Whse-Power was also inside the cordon at Cole's, and Mrs. Joe McGuinness was one of the first persons we saw. She was very active about Red Cross work. We saw William O'Brien who lived in Belvedere Place. He was arrested on ~~Monday~~^{Sunday}. We heard this after we came home. He told us he had left Connolly in Liberty Hall on the Sunday. According to him, Connolly had expressed the opinion that they were going out to the slaughter. A messenger, a girl, who had been in the College of Surgeons came through the cordon. She had been with Mrs. Connolly who, I think, was staying at the Countess Markievicz's cottage. She was a Citizen Army girl. When she had finished her story, she fell fast asleep on the chair.

On the Saturday or Sunday, on Mountjoy Square we met a man - a tramp - who had come through the cordon. He told us that the G.P.O. had been burnt out and abandoned, that there was no trace of any of the men and that he did not know where they had gone. That was our first information about the surrender; there had been countless rumours. It was after this we tried to get out via Gardiner Street, but a tommy with a cockney accent stopped us. "It would be easier to get to Boston than Fitzwilliam Street", he said. The cordon was lifted on Monday. We passed along fairly easily. We were not allowed to have our hands in our pockets.

When we arrived back at 31, Fitzwilliam Street,

Con Colbert's sister was there. She was lodging in Haddington Road, and came to our house to get news and could not get back. She was working in Lafayette's. She did not know where her brother was. Just as we had arrived and had got ourselves straightened out, I decided to escort Miss Colbert across Baggot Street Bridge. When we got to the bridge, the cordon was still there and also at Leeson Street Bridge. They would not let us pass, so we had to come back to 31. I rang at the door, and it was opened slightly by a friend of mine, Maurice Danaher. He said: "They are in". We turned away and walked around the Square for half an hour or so, until we thought the raiders were gone. They were the military, accompanied by detectives, and had come in and gone out by the back.

There was a full military raid on Wednesday when they also raided Plunkett's at No. 26. A brother-in-law (later) of Terence McSweeney was among the raiders - Lieutenant Murphy. I was not there on that occasion either. They were looking for arms.

On the 8th May, when Colbert was shot, his sister was at her office in Lafayette's, and when the news was announced in the Stop Press, the other girls kept it from her and later broke the news to her as gently as they could.

In February, 1916, a man, called Cormac Turner, arrived in Liberty Hall from Glasgow. He had come with a quantity of dynamite which he had procured from a munition factory where he worked. He was on the run,

and the question of providing a permanent place for him to stay arose. McDonagh, in agreement with the Citizen Army, arranged that he would stay with us until they eventually brought him out to Kimmage, as there was evidently some trouble about taking him at once over to Kimmage, which was a Volunteer Camp. It must have been about that time a working agreement was arrived at between the Volunteers and Citizen Army.

De Valera stayed at our house - in No. 5, Fitzwilliam Square to which we had moved - in the Spring of 1918, probably from April. At that time he was no longer on the run, as he was moving about openly. Sinéad Mason - now Mrs. Deirg - was his private secretary then, and worked in the house with him. Previous to this, M. Blanche, the French Consul, who had a flat in our house, had asked my mother to put him in contact with the leaders of the Sinn Féin movement. Harry Boland was Secretary at that time. At the first interview, he stressed the importance of sending consuls to France and Italy, with a view to spreading propaganda in favour of Ireland on the Continent. At a somewhat later stage, he was concerned in a proposal to provide Irish workmen for France instead of their going to Britain as migratory labourers. He thought this would be a means of opening up friendly contact between the two countries. Two priests - the Abbés Flynn - came over in connection with this, and interviewed de Valera. Mme. Bannard Cogley acted as interpreter on this occasion. Nothing came of the proposal. M. Blanche

continued to press his point with the Sinn Féin leaders, and when Seán T. O'Kelly was eventually sent, Blánche was of considerable assistance to him.

When the three members of the American Commission for Irish Independence were sent to Paris for the Peace Conference by the Irish Race Convention - Frank P. Walsh, Edward F. Dunne and Michael J. Ryan, with their Secretary, Mr. Lee - they were referred to Lloyd George by Wilson. Lloyd George advised them to come to Ireland and study the situation first. They stayed in our house - No. 5 - because there was a hotel strike on in Dublin and also de Valera occupied a flat there as his office and occasional residence. A large banquet was given in their honour, to which the Dáil Cabinet and members of other public bodies - about eighty in all - were invited. They visited the gaols and they also took evidence from various important people, as a result of which they published a most damning report against the British Government. Lloyd George made this an excuse for refusing to receive them again. It was within a week of their departure from Dublin that de Valera went secretly to England, disguised himself as a stoker, and sailed on a ship bound for America. Griffith did not know of his departure. He called to inquire for him and was astonished not to find him. He had been to the house in Greystones to look for him before that. Nothing of any importance happened in our house then. The tension was increasing. Collins was then carrying on the work at our house. Sinéad Mason became his secretary. The

Dáil Cabinet met periodically at the house, and the meetings were never raided.

Frank Kelly, who lives in 17 Rathgar Avenue, would be able to tell a lot about that time. He used to be frequently at the house. Joe O'Reilly always came to give notice when a meeting was to be held there. Archbishop Clune was never, to my knowledge, at our house.

In December, 1920, Collins came to us at No. 5, Fitzwilliam Square. He had heard that we had taken a house in Strand Road, Merrion, and he asked us would we take charge of Mr. de Valera there. We agreed, and he arrived on the 6th January, 1921. I don't know where he stayed from Christmas Eve when he landed until that date. He came back by boat in the same disguise he had used on the outward journey. Kathleen O'Connell came as an ordinary passenger by another boat. She had some trouble putting the detectives off her track. She came to our house a short time after him. He stayed until April. At the back of 31, Fitzwilliam Street, which they raided at that time, they found the Republican Bonds of the Dáil Loan in a room which, on account of its position, had never been discovered in previous raids. (When we left the house in 1917, it was converted into flats.) This room was Daithi Ó Donnacatha's depot, from which the Bonds were issued. The military and Auxiliaries asked for the owner of the house. Her address was given to them as 5, Fitzwilliam Square,

which they immediately surrounded. My mother lived in a flat there; the rest of the family was in Merrion. They removed everything, including furniture, from the flat. Among the papers found in the furniture, which was all taken to the Castle, they would probably have found a reference to the house in Merrion. I happened to be with my mother at the time of the raid, and I went out by a roundabout way to Merrion to warn de Valera. De Valera had a Council summoned to determine what to do. De Valera was loth to leave. Collins and the others, including, I think, Peadar McMahon, thought it wiser for him to leave. He went to Dr. Farnan's at 5 Merrion Square. Kathleen O'Connell and my sister started to burn the papers, spending that night and the next day at it. There was no raid, and on the third day de Valera came to see how things were; and he decided that, if there was no raid that night, he would come back. There was a fierce raid that night - Black and Tans, Auxiliaries and Military. They smashed in the windows and reefered the place. Under the carpet on the stairs, they found a letter from Madame Markievicz - I don't know how it got there. When they had left, the two ladies were sitting defeated in the room wondering what they would do. An ordinary policeman came in and asked whether he could do anything to help. They did not stay in the house. I think they went out to the fields at the back.

Peace negotiations were on foot for some time. Four men were to be executed in Cork. On a Sunday in March - about St. Patrick's Day - de Valera wired to Lloyd George saying negotiations would be broken off if the men were executed. Lloyd George could not be found, and the executions took place. The negotiations were broken off and were not resumed for some time - a short time before Lord Fitzalan was appointed Lord Lieutenant.

In No. 5 Merrion Square, de Valera had not enough scope for his work, and again we were asked by Mick Collins to put him up. We took Glenvar in Cross Avenue, Blackrock. A Mrs. Dove owned the house and she wanted to sell it quickly, in order to go to England. My mother, as a Mrs. McCarthy, bought it, Collins subscribing £1,000; the price was £3,500. It was put out that Mrs. McCarthy's married daughter was about to have an arrival in the family. The "McCarthy's" went in very quietly, i.e., de Valera, Miss O'Connell and my sister; and Mrs. Dove went to England. The thing was done so quietly that the neighbours knew Mrs. Dove was gone, but did not know anyone else had come in. The local Volunteers raided the mails, and brought them in to the grounds to sort them. When they had finished examining them, the Volunteers held up Major Forrest, and asked him to take them back to the Post Office. The Major was asked where they were got. He said at Glenvar. He was asked who was in Glenvar. He said it was vacant. The military raided it to find out whether the I.R.A.

had got in. De Valera, who was in the garden, saw them approach, went in to the house with the intention of bluffing them. They started to search the place and found papers. They arrested him without knowing who he was. They also arrested Kathleen O'Connell, but released her. We surmised that, as negotiations were going on, orders had been issued not to arrest him, as he was released the next day. When they found who he was, they wanted to make him a State prisoner, but he refused. He was in a dreadful state when he came back and thought of resigning, as he considered his utility was at an end. About a week after that, Lloyd George's letter came suggesting negotiations.

SIGNED: Milo Mac Garry
DATE: 21st February 1950

WITNESS: Lincoln W. Crossan
DATE: 27. 2. 1950

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