

W. S. 943

**ORIGINAL**

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21  
NO. W.S. 943

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 943

**Witness**

Michael Staines,  
8 Castle Road,  
Clontarf,  
Dublin.

**Identity.**

Quartermaster Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers,  
1913-1916;

First Commissioner of Garda Síochána.

**Subject.**

Criticism of broadcast on Easter Week 1916  
made by Peter Reynolds from Radio Éireann  
on Easter Monday 1953.

**Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.**

Nil

File No. S.595

Form B.S.M. 2

# ORIGINAL

Statement by Mr. Michael Staines,  
8, Castle Road, Clontarf, Dublin.

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Regarding a broadcast from Radio Éireann on Easter Monday last by Mr. Peter Reynolds, 31, Merrion Square, Dublin, I wish to correct some of the statements made on that occasion.

I mentioned in my statement to the Bureau that Seán Heuston and I were sent to see de Valera in Pearse Street in order to prevent him going out on the Sunday. What happened there upset us very much. It particularly affected Heuston who kept on repeating, "Michael, its horrible, its horrible". When we met Reynolds then I decided to take Heuston out to the country in order to talk it over in a quiet place. We went to Coards Tea Rooms in the Pine Forest. We discussed the thing fully and looked at it more calmly and coolly than if we had been in town, listening to people talking. We did not trust Reynolds <sup>to the extent that we would give him</sup> - we used himself and his bicycle - that was all. We had had no regular meals that day but we did have milk and soda and biscuits in a milk shop opposite Harcourt Street Station. Heuston was jumping with tension.

We did not call at Eamonn Ceannt's house; nor at Eoin MacNeill's house, nor at St. Enda's. I am very definite about this.

Reynolds makes a reference to the fact that he was stopped by an Inspector when taking his baby in a sidecar to see his sister in Ballybough. I do not think there was any Inspector in Dublin who knew Reynolds sufficiently well to be this familiar with him. The only man who might have known him was a plain-clothes officer attached to 'D' Division named Cullinane. I do not for one moment believe that Reynolds used the words "If two men want to

*important information*

2.

live, you go one way and I the other". Years afterwards I ~~heard~~<sup>heard</sup> that Cullinane was working for our side but I am satisfied that this is not correct. He was, however, a decent type of police officer who gave us no trouble and who actually refused to identify Volunteers who might have been taken into custody from time to time. Reynolds' reference to the fact that Cullinane got "great promotion" is not strictly correct as, when Cullinane retired from the Guards, he held the rank of Sergeant.

There were parabellums used prior to 1916 - I received two or three for the use of my Company. Reynolds was not the type to whom one of these would have been issued.

The week before the Rising Ned Daly told me definitely that McCormack was not going to be in charge of the Company during the Rising and that he was appointing Donnchadh O'Callaghan, who was either a 1st or 2nd Lieutenant, instead. McCormack had intimated beforehand to Commandant Daly that he was not going to take any part in the Rising.

In my capacity as Brigade Quartermaster and, later, as Quartermaster-General, never, at any time, did I see or know of any Maxim guns being included in the Volunteer armament. Even during Easter Week I did not know of any case of a machine gun being used, so that Reynolds' statement in this connection over the Radio is totally inaccurate.

Regarding the statement re the blowing up of Nelson's Pillar with gelignite, I have a recollection of certain men coming to me and asking me for explosives to blow up the Pillar. I told them we needed any gelignite we had for other purposes - the making of bombs, etc.

In any case, we did not know in what direction the Pillar would fall, even if it were blown up. They persisted, however, and I went to Pearse about this matter. He hooshed them off and said that it was not to be blown up. To my knowledge no other attempt was made during the week to blow up the Pillar.

Reynolds was originally despatch rider to Captain Monteith, O/C 'A' Company, 1st Battalion. I would not think that Reynolds ever did any despatch work with his motor bicycle outside of the 1st Battalion prior to 1916. He probably brought a despatch to the G.P.O. on Easter Monday but I would not know what use was made of him there afterwards.

When we arrived with the main body from Liberty Hall, we entered the G.P.O. by the central door in O'Connell Street and certainly no shot was fired by Commandant-General Pearse at that particular time.

I give below the opinion of Ben <sup>Byrne</sup> Bura, who was a Volunteer who took part in the fighting in the North King Street area in Easter Week, and to whom I showed a copy of the script of the talk given by Reynolds over Radio Éireann on Easter Monday last: - 1953.

"Michael,

This is the most awful tripe. He carefully avoids any reference which can be checked. We can hardly blame the English Sunday papers when Radio Éireann allows time for attached.

Thanks.

*Byrne*  
Ben Bura,  
14.4.53."

Signed *M. J. Staines*  
(M. J. Staines)

Witness *Mr F. Ryan Comdt*

(M. F. Ryan) Comd't.

Date *10<sup>th</sup> May 1954*

10th May 1954.

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