

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 1107

ROINN



COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 1,107

Witness

Louis E. O'Dea,
Fort Lorenzo,
Taylor's Hill,
Galway.

Identity.

Associate of Sinn Fein Movement, 1920;
Solicitor, Galway, 1954.

Subject.

I.R.A. engagements with R.I.C. and
Black and Tans, Galway, 1920 - 1921.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.1,096

Form B.S.M. 2

N.S.1.107

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Amongst some visitors in my house that evening was Dr. Dillon, Professor of Chemistry in University College Galway. He went to the Station to purchase a paper in order that we might learn the condition of the late Terence McSweeney then on hunger strike.

The other visitors in the house was Mr. J. J. Cottow & Mrs. King of U.S.C. & Mr. Dillon.

When he returned his story was that when the train arrived several people rushed towards the carriage from which the papers were being taken but that a Black and Tan named Crumb drew his revolver as if he thought or pretended that the crowd were rushing on him. *Crumb pointed his revolver at a Volunteer* Sean Turke jumped on Crumb's back and Crumb had the revolver practically pointed at Turke's chest when another Volunteer shot Crumb and killed him outright.

I was very upset about this occurrence because a few days before in Lisdoonvarna, Divisional Inspector Cruise who with his wife was dining at Thomond Hease/^{Hotel} spoke to me after dinner and said to me "What do you think of the verdict of the shooting". I said "What Verdict". He said "Oh! they found wilful murder". This referred to the shooting of a Policeman at the Railway Bridge at Merlin Park. I said "Who were on the Jury". He said "I do not know". I said "Was so and so and so and so and he said "I think they were". I said "If that was the kind of Jury nobody would pay the smallest attention to the verdict". He then said "Isn't this murder an awful thing". I said "Is it murder? Are not the R.I.C. the eyes and ears of the English Government". He said "They are". I said "In other words are not they the spies of the English Government and what happens a spy in any country?". His answer was "now I want to tell you something 'My men came to me in a body and said they would no longer do this dirty work'. ^{Crumb} I said "I agreed with them but that it was too big a subject for one barrack and that they ought to circularise all the barracks in Ireland and they could see I was at their backs". I wrote a letter to George Nicholls Solicitor, Galway that evening and gave him the full gist of

being held. I asked him had he those instructions in writing. He said "No". I then informed him that we cared nothing for his instructions, we were going on with the enquiry, that even under ^{DORA} an Order had to be in writing. He said "I believe I have the right to stop this enquiry and I have the power". I said "We do not care about your rights or your powers".

Fr. Considine then appealed to me and pointed out that the place was surrounded and there was danger that if an enquiry went on some of the people including ladies might be injured. I said I would be guided by him. He said "I am not dictating, I am merely making a suggestion". I said I would be guided by his suggestion. ^{At his request} I was then requested to ask the people present to disperse and I addressed those present in the following words:

"Ladies and Gentlemen, the people of Galway wanted a full, frank and open enquiry into the murder of the ¹⁶ Citizens by the R.I.C. and Black and Tans. The latter have funk'd the enquiry and have got an order to suppress it". Cruise then shouted "I will not have that, call in the men". Fr. Considine again appealed to me to ask the people to disperse and I said "I now ask you to disperse quietly". The people got up and left. Padraig O'Connaire who sat on a high seat at the back of the hall jumped off his seat and as I was passing out he shook me by the hand and said "Judgment has gone by Default".

When I left the hall Mr. ^{Mc} Mix of the "Galway Express" was waiting for me. I gave him a report of what I intended to say and in which I referred to the Statement of District Inspector Smith at Listowel and went on to say that this policy was now being carried out in Galway and other places. I referred particularly to what Smith said "If you see a man crossing a field, shoot him. If you see a man walking with hands in pockets shoot him. You will not be held accountable for anything you do".

The following Friday Night the "Express Office" was wrecked to such an extent that the papers could not be published afterwards. On the same night my house and Offices were bombed. The bombs thrown into my house did not do as much damage as

was intended so a week afterwards the Black and Tans and Auxiliary came back and stole practically everything of value in the house, took all the papers they could gather from the Office and threw them into the Street so that the Square from the South side to the North was littered with papers, practically all of which were retrieved by good neighbours and given back to me.

After the date of the enquiry I could not stay in my own house but I was accommodated by Mr. Michael Allen, Solicitor, Galway who also sheltered others and who had a house from which there was a secret passage through which an escape could be made. Numerous Galway citizens could not sleep in their houses at that time and even certain ladies had to leave their houses at night for example - Miss Nally of my Office, Miss Keane of Dominick Street, now Mrs. E. Browne and several others whose names I cannot now recall.

I knew Fr. Griffin Very well. He often visited me and I believe he was the best Gael in Galway. He spoke Irish beautifully and his entire sympathy was with the Volunteers. The late Fr. O'Meehan was also a tower of strength to the movement as was both Fr. O'Kelly of Knock and Fr. Mansfield O.S.A. who is again back in Galway and one of the bravest men in Ireland. I do not know the exact place at which Fr. Griffin was shot but I believe it occurred at Taylor's Hill where the Auxiliary resided in Col. O'Hara's house now occupied by the Sisters of Mercy, because that night a bullet went through the window of the Dominican Convent, Taylor's Hill. Next day some of the Auxiliary called, asked for, and were given the bullet.

On the first night of my return to the Office there was a cross on my door, a similar cross had been put on the doors of the late Michael Walsh, who was killed by the Black and Tans at the Spanish Arch and another on the doors of Fr. Griffin and Fr. Meehan. Shots were fired into my Office

Handwritten text in the left margin, possibly a list or notes, including the word "Mammals" and other illegible entries.

~~Handwritten text~~

I remember the night of the 9th September, 1920. Amongst some visitors in my house that evening was Dr. Dillon, Professor of Chemistry in University College, Galway. He went to the Station to purchase a paper in order that we might learn the condition of the late Terence McSweeney then on hunger-strike. The other visitors in the house were Mr. and Mrs. Seán Concannon, Revd. Dr. Cotter and Mrs. King of U.S.A. and Mrs. Dillon.

When he returned his story was that when the train arrived several people rushed towards the carriage from which the papers were being taken but that a Black and Tan named Crumb drew his revolver as if he thought or pretended that the crowd were pushing on him. Crumb pointed his revolver at a Volunteer. Seán Turke jumped on Crumb's back and Crumb had the revolver practically pointed at Turke's chest when another Volunteer shot Crumb and killed him outright.

I was very upset about this occurrence because a few days before in Lisdoonvarna, Divisional Inspector Cruise who with his wife was dining at Thomond House Hotel spoke to me after dinner and said to me "What do you think of the verdict of the shooting?" I said "What verdict?" He said "Oh! they found wilful murder". This referred to the shooting of a Policeman at the Railway Bridge at Merlin Park. I said "Who were on the jury?" He said "I do not know". I said "Was so and so and so and so" and he said "I think they were". I said "If that was the kind of jury nobody would pay the smallest attention to the verdict". He then said "Isn't this murder an awful thing". I said "Is it murder? Are not the R.I.C. the eyes and ears of the English Government". He said "They are". I said "In other words are not they the spies of the English

Government and what happens a spy in any country"? His answer was "now I want to tell you something. My men came to me in a body and said they would no longer do this dirty work. I said I agreed with them but that it was too big a subject for one barrack and that they ought to circularise all the barracks in Ireland and they could see I was at their backs". I wrote a letter to George Nicholls, Solicitor Galway, that evening and gave him the full gist of the conversation and said I hoped that nothing would occur that would injure the relations that might come from such action. The occurrence at the Railway Station therefore, on the evening of the 9th disturbed me very much and it occurred to me that it was done possibly in order to ginger up the R.I.C. into hostile action.

I was informed by a School Teacher subsequently that on that very night Crumb had drawn a revolver on him and that after a struggle the teacher got away. It would appear therefore that Crumb's idea was to cause a disturbance.

The effect of the shooting was very bad. The R.I.C. and Black and Tans went to the house of Mr. James Quirke, a Corkman employed in the Jewellery Establishment of a Mr. O'Donovan of Galway. They brought him down to the docks, surrounded him and poured lead into his body. James Quirke was attended by the late Fr. Griffin who was afterwards shot by the Black and Tans, and died about three hours later in great agony. On that same night they took out Mr. John Broderick and Mr. Joseph Cummins, put them against a wall, fired several shots at them and they each fell in turn. The Tans left believing they had killed the men but they both survived. The same thing happened to a Medical Student who was afterwards Medical Officer in Moycullen, Co. Galway,

and who has since died.

After those shootings some Citizens met, decided to hold an enquiry into the shooting of Galway Citizens by the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries, and they appointed me as Solicitor for the Citizens. Notice of this enquiry was posted on the walls at Galway and a copy sent to each of the District Inspectors of the R.I.C. The enquiry was held at the Town Hall on the day of . The people appointed to hold the enquiry were Father, afterwards Monsignor Considine, John Conroy, Solicitor and Coroner, Professor Tom Dillon and Tom Ray, an ex R.I.C. Before that enquiry opened the Town Hall was surrounded by Black and Tans and R.I.C. Divisional Inspector Cruise R.I.C. came into the building and informed me that he had been to Renmore Military Barracks and got instructions to prevent the enquiry being held. I asked him had he those instructions in writing. He said "No". I then informed him that we cared nothing for his instructions, we were going on with the enquiry, that even ^{under} D.O.R.A. an Order had to be in writing. He said "I believe I have the right to stop this enquiry and I have the power". I said "We do not care about your rights or your powers". Fr. Considine then appealed to me and pointed out that the place was surrounded and there was danger that if an enquiry went on some of the people including ladies might be injured. I said I would be guided by him. He said "I am not dictating, I am merely making a suggestion". I said I would be guided by his suggestion. At his request I was then requested to ask the people present to disperse and I addressed those present in the following words:

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When I left the hall Mr. Nix of the "Galway Express" was waiting for me. I gave him a report of what I intended to say and in which I referred to the Statement of District Inspector Smith at Listowel and went on to say that this policy was now being carried out in Galway and other places. I referred particularly to what Smith said "If you see a man crossing a field, shoot him. If you see a man walking with hands in pockets shoot him. You will not be held accountable for anything you do".

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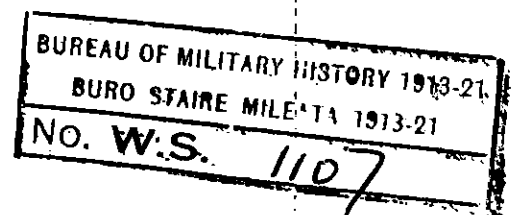
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(Signed) L.E. Ó DEAGHAIDH

27 u La Eanáir, 1955.

Fianaise: Con Moynihan (Investigator)

Filomena Ní Catháin,
Gaillimh.



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L. E. O'Deaigh

(L. E. O Deaghaidh)

27u La Eanair, 1955.

Fianaise:

Com. Moynihan Investigator

Filomena Ni. Cathain,
Gallimh.