

Statement of Peter Edward RUSSELL

Product Type: TEXT DOCUMENTS:Statement

Completed Date: 15 Jun 2001

Brief Description: Statement of Peter Edward RUSSELL taken by Detective Sergeant NICHOLAS, at Paddington Police Station. Peter RUSSELL is the brother of deceased, John Alan RUSSELL. This statement was taken in addition to the statement that had been taken from RUSSELL on the 24/11/1989.

Summary:

- Para 3:** Witness states he is natural brother of John Alan RUSSELL. States in 1989 they lived together.
- Para 4:** Witness states he attended Glebe Morgue 24/11/1989 with Constable BARRETT where he identifies the body of his brother, John Alan RUSSELL.
- Para 5:** Witness states he made a statement at Bondi Police Station that same day.
- Para 6:** Witness describes family unit being grandfather, himself, John and witness' son Allen.
- Para 7:** Witness states he became aware his brother (RUSSELL) was gay in 1978.
- Para 9:** Witness describes RUSSELL's work history prior to his death focussing on bar work.
- Para 10:** Witness describes how RUSSELL was able to look after himself quite well in removing patrons from bars. Further describes how RUSSELL was active in Judo and Boxing when he was younger. Further describes how in brotherly disagreements the witness found it difficult to control RUSSELL even though the witness was bigger. Describes how RUSSELL was strong for his size & "threw a pretty good punch."
- Para 11:** Witness describes his own fitness and how RUSSELL managed to keep fit through his work as a yardsman at Rose Bay Primary School and assisted in coaching junior rugby league and soccer sides at Double Bay Primary School.
- Para 12 :** Witness describes RUSSELL's drinking habits. Claims he drank regularly at various places, in particular the Legion Club. Describes how RUSSELL would have staff drinks, then take home a bottle of scotch which they would drink together in 2 or 3 hour and sometimes RUSSELL would continue drinking and go out to Darlinghurst or some times the Taxi Club. Claims RUSSELL could handle his liquor without passing out or losing proper control of his reflexes.
- Para 14:** Witness explains RUSSELL occasionally smoked cannabis.
- Para 15 :** Witness discusses the relationship come friendship between RUSSELL and I403 who was also gay and worked with RUSSELL at Tropicana. Further describes his social network as being mostly gay although claims he knew people through football and work who would not have known this as RUSSELL did not publicise the fact that he was gay, however he was not secretive. Describes Russell's involvement in gay mardis gras.
- Para 17:** Witness describes RUSSELL's acquaintance with Robert "Dolly" DUNN, whom he met through Peter I403
- Para 18:** Witness describes his own knowledge of Mark's Park as a gay beat and refers to RUSSELL frequenting Mark's Park which he referred to as "the beat".

New South Wales Police

P.190

v4.0

STATEMENT in the matter of:
Death of John Russell

Place: Paddington
Police Station
Date : 15 June 2001

Name: Peter Edward Russell

Address: [REDACTED] Pagewood

Tel. No.: [REDACTED]

Occupation: Door installer

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 for prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

2. I am 42 years of age.

3. I am the natural brother of John Alan Russell who was born on 28 November, 1957. In 1989 we both lived together at [REDACTED] Oakley Road, Bondi.

4. On 24 November, 1989 I had a conversation with Constable Barret of Bondi Police Station who then took me to the Glebe Morgue where I identified the body of my brother John Alan Russell.

5. Later that day I went to Bondi Police Station where I spoke to Detective Owens and made a two page statement.

6. John and I were very close and had been since we were children. We had a small family in Sydney comprising our grandfather, myself and my son Allen and John. I was a single

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parent at that time and we would all take turns looking after Allen who was 11 at that time.

7. When John was about 18 or 19 years of age I became aware that he was homosexual, mainly from the places he used to drink and the people he was associating with in his social life.

8. In about 1978, John was about 21, he started working in bars and clubs. He would have worked fairly early on at Charlie Browns Wine Bar, Pitt Street, Sydney which was frequented mainly by the gay community although there were not what you would say were exclusively gay bars around at that time.

9. Later on John worked at Patches in Oxford Street as a barman and that bar was exclusively frequented by gays. At one stage I know he was the Bar Manager for Tropicanas in Oxford Street, and he also worked at Bronte Bowling Club and a couple of other casual bar jobs which were not necessarily at gay bars.

10. In these positions, John would have on occasion been involved in removing disorderly patrons from bars and for his height and size he was able to look after himself quite well. John was very active and when he was young did judo and boxing. Over the years, as brothers, we had disagreements about different things and on a few occasions came to blows. I remember the last occasion this happened was about 4 months before he died. I found in these circumstances I had a lot difficulty controlling him and I am six foot one and a half and my weight has fluctuated between 69 and 74 kgs. On that occasion we both ended up bleeding from nose, lips and with black eyes. He was pretty strong for a bloke his size and threw a pretty good punch. When that incident happened, it was about 7 o'clock at night, at home and whilst we had both had

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a couple of drinks, neither one of us was effected by alcohol.

11. I have always been pretty fit and in 1989 I played touch football and was coaching junior rugby league sides and soccer sides at Rose Bay and Double Bay public schools. I was the yardsman at Double Bay Primary School. John spent a bit of time as the Yardsman at Rose Bay Public School and used to help with the coaching and was pretty fit although not engaging in any organised physical training himself.

12. John and I used to drink together regularly at Rose Bay Hotel after training on 3 nights a week. Quite often we would get there after work, 5 o'clock and then we would stay until closing time, around 11 o'clock. During that time we would drink schooners, three or four the first hour and then we'd get in a shout with about half a dozen others and have two or three drinks every hour after that. The other people would include blokes associated with the football club and other coaches. At one stage John was the manager of the BP service station at Rose Bay and everyone used to know him down there and he drank regularly down there. He would have been drinking every day. Whilst John used to drink a fair bit on occasion, he never drank until he was sick or passed out or even lost proper control of his reflexes. He never liked being out of control.

13. My local pub was the Royal Hotel at Bondi and he used to pop in there every now and then. He used to drink at the Legion Club at Charing Cross, and he had staff drinks after work every day, where ever he was working and he usually brought home a take away which was a bottle of scotch. Quite often he and I would drink the bottle of scotch in a few hours, 2 or 3 hours, and sometimes he would then go out to Darlinghurst to go clubbing. I know that

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he sometimes went to the Taxi Club, the Exchange Hotel, the Flinders Hotel and the Albury.

14. John only really drank alcohol has a recreation. I know on occasion he may have smoked the occasion pit of pot, but that was not a regular thing and just something me might have done at a party or something like that. He didn't use pot at hime and after he died and we sorted his things out there were no evidence of any drugs or bongos or anything like that.

15. John had a friend 1403 who was also gay and they used to work together at Patches and Tropicana. They had a relationship at one stage and then maintained a friendship. I would say most of his friends were gay although he met people through football and work in casual jobs and they would not have known that he was gay. He never publicised the fact that he was gay, but was not particularly secretive either.

16. John was very well known in the gay community and was one of the instigators of the gay mardi gras. He he was one of the people starting off the 'Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence' float.

17. I know that John also knew Robert Dunn who was also known as Dolly who owned the Woodhill Mountain Duck and Poultry Farm and I know he and 1403 used to go down and stay there on weekends. I think 1403 introduced John to Robert Dunn. He had another friend who owned a motel at Katoomba or in the mountains around there.

18. I know the area at Marks Park was a gay beat and had been for a long time before 1989. I knew that from being a Bondi resident.

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On occasion John had mentioned Marks Park and referred to it as 'The Beat'. From those conversations I am sure that John had been to Marks Park to meet other gay men on a couple of occasions, but it was definitely not a regular thing that he did, as he used to work in Darlinghurst and spend a lot of his working time there as well as a fair bit of his social life and free time.



Signature: _____

G. Nicholas
G. NICHOLAS
SERGEANT.
ROSE BAY LAC.
15 JUNE 2001.