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Statement of: HALSALL, PETER JOSEPH OLIVER

Form MG11(T)

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I remember spending a considerable amount of my time preventing John MAESTRI from entering the boy's showers. MAESTRI would try 'to make sure they washed themselves properly'. I told Laurence about this and he shrugged it off by saying something like, 'there's nothing in it at all' or 'there's nothing to it' and refused to do anything about it.

I had suspicions that something was not quite right with Laurence, nothing I could put my finger on but he would do 'face to face' confessions with the boys in his office and Abbey, not in the confessional box, which seemed very odd.

I would summarise my position as a junior in a hierarchy and whenever anyone would complain nothing would be done. There were many times that I complained about various people and inappropriate behaviour but was ignored. Over the years I reported such matters or asked advice of John BYRNE (now deceased) and Christopher CLEUGH, the headmaster until last year. I sought advice from John BYRNE about what to do about my suspicions regarding MAESTRI, he advised me to let it be, but if I really wanted to pursue the issue, talk to the SOPER, which I did and got nowhere. I made complaints about both PEARCE and MAESTRI but they didn't go anywhere and it definitely harmed my career. At times if felt like the mafia, like ramming your head against a brick wall. I believe they all knew how I felt about the various activities and so were very careful around me. When CLEUGH became head I attempted to make him aware of past issues with PEARCE and others, he did not welcome this and indeed, when PEARCE went to trial he asked the staff to pray for him. I left the meeting after suggesting that we should pray for his victims not him. CLEUGH started to refer to historic abuse when the fullness of the problem of abuse became public, which I found rather ironic as PEARCE's last victim was a pupil in the school during his headship. In my mind there has been a culture of cover up and denial, throughout my time in the school followed recently by passing the buck.

Later on, I recall being told at a reunion of old boys by [RC-A628] that he had invited David PEARCE to his wedding as he had had no bad experiences with PEARCE. However, PEARCE turned up with

Signature: PETER JOSEPH OLIVER HALSALL  
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Signature witnessed by:

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