

17/6/05
0955 hrs

[REDACTED]

Dunedin

[REDACTED] STATES

My full name is [REDACTED]

I reside in Dunedin and am aged 38 years.

I am making this statement to Detective Sergeant Malcolm INGLIS about attending Bayfield High School and an incident while there involving Mr BENSON-POPE a teacher at the time.

I came from Tahuna Intermediate to Bayfield High School starting at Bayfield in 1981.

A good friend of mine who started Bayfield with me was [REDACTED]

I think [REDACTED] was in my third form class.

At Bayfield high School I started 3F.

I did quite well at school and was the top of my class in the 3rd form.

I got moved up to 4X in the 4th form.

I didn't get into much trouble in the 3rd form.

I did get into a bit of trouble in the 4th form.

In the 4th form I got around with [REDACTED] we just got around as friends, it was like all kids at school, there were no gangs getting around causing trouble.

I did have a bit to do with [REDACTED] who got me into a bit of trouble.

Mr BENSON-POPE took me for Social Studies in the 4th form.

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Look at my school report which I still have, other teachers I remember from that are, for tech drawing Ms [REDACTED], for maths I'm not sure.

For science I had Mr [REDACTED], for English it would have been Mrs [REDACTED], engineering was Mr [REDACTED] for geography it was [REDACTED] Mr [REDACTED] was my form teacher that year.

I didn't really get into trouble in class.

I didn't get into trouble in Mr BENSON-POPE's class.

Mr BENSON-POPE was a good teacher and a good communicator.

I think he gave me my interest in travel.

In the 4th form I went on a school camp to Tautuka in the Catlins.

I think from memory it was just some classes that went down.

Reading the school magazine that Detective Sergeant INGLIS has shown me, in the programme of events for the school, I see the 4th form camp at Tautuka was held in October 1982.

I remember that [REDACTED] was on the camp so 4F must have been at the camp.

[REDACTED] was there, he was in 4F as well.

The camp ran for a few days, I'm not sure now long maybe a short week 4 days.

We stayed in bunk rooms down there, with a big main dining room.

I'm not sure what night the incident occurred on, but in my bunk room there was myself, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

We did pick on [REDACTED], it was common for [REDACTED] to be picked on, he seemed to thrive on it.

He would always come back to you or others for more.

He seemed to like the attention he got from being picked on.

On the night of the incident we were meant to be in bed, for a while, but we were making a lot of noise, high spirits like you do.

The three of us would have been picking on [REDACTED] to be making the noise.

BENSON-POPE came over, and he got us all out of bed and made us stand in the hallway outside the bunk room.

[REDACTED] started to give his version of events that had been going on. It didn't make us look good, saying we were doing all the talking.

So I tried to give my version of events as [REDACTED] wasn't making us look that good.

BENSON-POPE told me to shut up, he was very direct, you could tell he meant it.

What happened then was [REDACTED] kept giving his version of events and I kept talking as well.

You can imagine what it was like, both of us talking.

I was standing with my back to the wall [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were along the wall from me, [REDACTED] would have been against the opposite wall to me facing towards me.

BENSON-POPE was like standing in the middle of the hall between us.

I was looking towards [REDACTED]

What happened then was, I was a 14 year old kid, I had my hands beside my side, I was looking at [REDACTED] looking straight ahead.

I was still talking, he had told me to shut up.

The next thing that happened was I got a back hand punch from BENSON-POPE, right in the face, in the nose.

I did not see it coming as I was not looking at him, I was looking at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] so I couldn't defend myself from it.

It was a hard back hand punch with a closed fist, I think.

I couldn't say for sure.

It knocked my head back and it hit the wall quite hard, I hadn't expected it.

My head went back, hit the wall, then stumbled forward, I thought I may fall over with the force of it, but my head came forward and blood started pissing out of nose.

I would say I was shocked, I didn't expect that.

I looked at [REDACTED] to see what he would do, as I knew BENSON-POPE shouldn't have done that, I was waiting to see what [REDACTED] would do.

Everyone was a bit shocked.

BENSON-POPE spoke first and said, something like, I am sorry that I hit you but you shouldn't pick on other kids.

The hypocrisy of that comment has lived with me for some time.

My nose just stopped bleeding and I think we were sent back to bed.

No one else really said anything at the time.

We were quiet after that.

It could have been the night before, that night or the night after that myself and [REDACTED] were made to sleep in the hallway in our sleeping bags.

Everyone who was in the hallway would have seen what happened.

However [REDACTED] died a few years ago.

Nothing that I remember was said the next morning, the whole thing was played down.

Everyone at the camp found out about it, most people thought it was funny.

I was traumatised by the whole thing, just pissed off.

I think that the teachers on the camp knew about it, as it was known I had been injured.

There were still a few days of the camp to go so it just died a natural death over those days.

I didn't tell my parents about it on returning from camp.

I thought that I would get into trouble with them.

I had been in trouble with [REDACTED] where we took a train in the railway yards.

I think that BENSON-POPE caned me twice at school, but that was what happened at school and there was no problem with that.

Mr [REDACTED] did not say anything at the camp or afterwards.

Nothing else untoward happened, Mr BENSON-POPE was a hard case, a good Social Studies teacher.

The Phil WEAVER incident may well have been a story at school at the time, with it coming up recently, it sounded very familiar.

I stayed at school through to halfway through the 6th form.

Mr BENSON-POPE stayed our form teacher, but I did not have him as a teacher after the 4th form.

This all came out recently as Aaron was out in February 2005 to get married. I went to the wedding.

It was around this time that I got a call from [REDACTED] to say a TV report was sniffing around about BENSON-POPE and that my name had come up.

Gordon said he was coming around to his place and would I come around as he knew about me so it may be best to meet with him.

I decided to go around and I met with a Duncan GARNER.

He asked me outright if I was the one who got hit in the nose.

I told him I was, but didn't want to get involved with bringing BENSON-POPE down as it was in the past.

I told him at that time it was off the record, it was an informal chat, it was not an interview.

While there Aaron TASKER turned up, he did not know that Duncan GARNER was going to be there.

I had gone around to set things straight, I didn't want things going further.

I wasn't going to lie about the punch in the nose, as everyone knew about it.

We had a general talk about what happened at Bayfield High School, Aaron mentioned the Phil WEAVER incident in the discussion.

At the time I think that BENSON-POPE just lost his temper.

Duncan GARNER did say at the time it would make a good story, but I did not want to become involved at the time, it was in the past.

I haven't spoken to Rodney HIDE, I have only spoken to Duncan GARNER.

I know after I spoke to him he did do some more digging up around Dunedin in relation to BENSON-POPE.

Out of the blue Duncan GARNER rang me up, I thought it was the end of it when I saw him earlier in the year.

On this occasion he said that BENSON-POPE was going to be asked if he bullied kids at school in Parliament.

He told me to listen to it.

I was working outside and had the radio on and the next thing I heard it on the radio.

So I came inside to watch on the TV out of Internet, and there he was denying it on the TV saying it didn't happen.

His response was very aggressive, it was an aggressive stance he took.

I just thought that is typical, its life, it happened a long time ago, I was a bit pissed off, but so what.

Duncan GARNER rang me back and said what do you think of that. I told him I still wasn't doing an interview, I still believed it was wrong the way this was being done and had been brought up.

It was political to get at BENSON-POPE and the Labour Party. I didn't agree with it, as it was in the past.

The next day which pissed me off was that everyone believed BENSON-POPE.

Then that weekend in the ODT [REDACTED] came out saying what a great guy BENSON-POPE was and we were all liars.

That is what made me send a fax through to Duncan GARNER confirming what had happened to me.

My name has not been used in this and I don't wish for the Police to give it out either.

If BENSON-POPE turns around and calls us liars and attacks us, I would like to take this further.

It was wrong what he did to me as he shouldn't have hit me, then lying in Parliament is wrong also.

I have nothing against BENSON-POPE as a person, but I believe that in Parliament there must be integrity and you must be able to trust people there. I think as a New Zealand citizen I have the responsibility to stand up if I know that someone in our Parliament is telling lies as it is what our society is based on.

There were things that went on around school about BENSON-POPE, but I did not see anything happen to other boys.

I do remember that on school camp you could smell alcohol on his breath at night, I don't remember if it was on the night of the incident.

Other teachers just disciplined you in the normal manner.

You got caned or detentions.

There was a train incident in the same year I should tell you about, but there was [REDACTED] and myself who went to the Railway yards at night and got a train going and we moved wagons about in the yards.

We got caught and dealt with at the time and I wasn't allowed to see him again.

I can't recall think of anything else to add.

I HAVE READ THIS STATEMENT AND IT IS TRUE & CORRECT

[REDACTED]