

Father Peter Julian Brock is charged in court with child-sex offences

Written by Staff Writers | Brokenrites.alphalink.com.au
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Catholic priest Father Peter Julian Brock allegedly committed sexual offences against boys after playing a card game called "Strip Jack Naked", an Australian court has been told. In this game, as the cards were dealt, a player lost pieces of clothing until he became naked.

Father Brock, 63, appeared in Newcastle Local Court, New South Wales, on 19-21 August 2009, charged with 22 alleged child-sex offences involving two boys during the 1970s. After taking evidence, the court adjourned this hearing until a future date.

Brock has not yet been required to indicate whether he wishes to plead guilty or not guilty.

This is a preliminary hearing, before a magistrate, who will determine whether there is sufficient evidence to warrant committing the defendant to a higher court (the District Court of New South Wales) for possible trial before a judge and jury.

Peter Brock (date of birth 18 September 1945) is a priest of the Maitland-Newcastle diocese, which is one of the eleven Catholic dioceses in New South Wales.

Alleged victim #1

The Newcastle Herald reported that, in the first day of the committal hearing, an alleged victim told Newcastle Local Court of the ongoing abuse he had allegedly suffered at the hands of Brock after the priest had befriended his family.

The court was told that Brock had drunk alcohol and socialised with the man's father and often visited the family home.

He had introduced the alleged victim to the "Strip Jack Naked" card game and regularly played it at the family home, where the pair only got down to their shorts.

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But it was when Brock began asking the boy to a presbytery (a priest's house), sometimes by ringing the family and telling the boy's mother that he wanted to play cards after having a "bad day", that the abuse allegedly began, the court heard.

The alleged victim told the court that once naked, he and Brock would sit opposite each other and Brock would push the boy's knees apart "so he could look at me" before abusing him.

"He would be drinking and having a smile on his face and drank more and more," the witness said.

"He would keep encouraging me to keep my knees apart."

The alleged victim said he began putting more clothes on before visiting Brock in the hope that he would still be dressed when the priest was naked and "that once he had his clothes off I wouldn't have to go any further".

The alleged victim told the court of one occasion when Brock drove him home after abusing him.

"I went and had a shower. I am pretty sure I threw my underpants out and went to bed and cried," he said.

"[Brock] was having drinks with dad, laughing."

Father Brock's defence lawyer conducted a detailed cross-examination of this witness, concerning aspects of the witness's police statement.

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Alleged victim #2

The second alleged victim told the court about playing the card game "Strip Jack Naked" at a private residence with Brock and other boys.

He told the court of one occasion where he watched as another boy stripped naked. Brock then put his head between the boy's legs, the witness said.

"[Another boy] and I tried to stop Peter going any further with that game," the witness said.

He said he was left "flabbergasted" after waking up on a trip away to allegedly see Brock masturbating next to him.

The witness told the court Brock that later spoke to him about the incident, telling him "I'm just human too . . . or something along those lines".

The witness also spoke of camping trips where Brock encouraged boys to "skinny dip".

Under cross-examination by the defence lawyer, the witness said he did not tell anyone about any of the incidents until he was approached by police more than 30 years later.

Adjourned

On 21 August 2009, after three days of evidence, the magistrate adjourned the hearing until a later date.

The prosecution in this court case is prepared by the Lake Macquarie Detectives office, at Charlestown Police, Hunter Valley, New South Wales.

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