

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Murdoch RODGERS

Support person present: No

1. My name is Murdoch Rodgers. My date of birth is [REDACTED] 1950. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.
2. As a result of my involvement in making the film 'Sins of Our Fathers', broadcast on the BBC in July 2013, and carrying out further investigations after the film, I have had contact with over one hundred people who have told me of their experiences at Carlekemp Preparatory School and Fort Augustus Abbey School. I have built up trust with these individuals and that is something I would not want to betray. I therefore do not want to declare names, but I will give as much information as I can up to that point. I am hoping that the Inquiry will get the bulk of the personal testimonies from the individuals themselves.

Professional background

3. I studied history at university and when I was in my third year in 1977, I started doing a lot of what at that time was called oral history, which was basically just recording interviews with people. I moved fairly quickly on from that to get a part-time job with the BBC making a series of radio programmes which were based around oral history.
4. I did the radio programmes for about three or four years, and then I met up with someone who was a television producer and she and I set up our own independent television company, called Barony, in Edinburgh. We operated as an independent company through until about 1994, making films for programmes like Despatches and

we also did some work for the BBC, current affairs programmes and some arts programmes. My principal interest, however, was investigative journalism and that is what I was keen on pursuing.

5. We wound the company up when my partner moved back to Sweden with her family, and I joined the BBC in 1995 as a producer-director. I continued in this role, doing current affairs investigative journalism, both with the BBC in Scotland but mainly with Panorama, until I retired in 2015.
6. I was involved in two other big child abuse investigations before working on 'Sins of Our Father'. The first was a film about the Catholic Church in Wales. The investigation exposed the cover up of abuse by a paedophile priest. It led to the resignation and retrial of Archbishop Ward of Cardiff. The film was transmitted in November 2000. A couple of years after that, I did a worldwide child abuse investigation into Jehovah's Witnesses. They had a rule which appeared to contravene what was recommended by the police, namely that they had to have two witnesses to an abuse taking place, so there were a number of cases of individuals not being believed when they said they had been abused because they could not find another person to confirm the abuse. The film was transmitted in July 2002.

Sins of Our Fathers

Background

7. The investigation started as a result of a colleague, another news journalist, speaking to Mark Daly about someone who had come forward saying that he had been abused at Fort Augustus. Principally, Mark and I were the only two working on the investigation. We had one other researcher who worked with us, but it was mainly Mark and I for the duration of the project.
8. I think we first had a look at this at the end of 2012 and then we worked on it for maybe two or three months before we were in a position to start thinking about filming and

getting it commissioned. The programme went out at the end of July 2013. It's quite unusual to get six months to work on something like this.

9. Mark and I pretty much worked as equals, although our roles were different, Mark being the on-screen reporter and me the director working more behind the scenes. We divided our work up just along the basis of what needed done, was done. There was no demarcation. The rule that we applied for this particular investigation was that we would treat every case separately, with an agreement with the individuals concerned that our discussions would be confidential, only for research at this stage, and would not be shared with anyone else. We kept this pretty much under wraps until we were in a position where we felt we could go to the BBC lawyer and commissioning editor with a case that we could stand behind. Bearing in mind that this was post-Savile, it was pretty much the case that we knew we would have to have quite a substantial number of cases to present before we would be in a position to get it commissioned.

10. Mark and I were doing background research kind of independently of each other and the thing that became quite intriguing to both of us when we had a look at the Benedictines as an organisation, was that the only abbey in the UK that did not have some kind of record or history of abuse taking place was Fort Augustus. When we had a look at the six main abbeys in England, all of them over the previous period of about fifteen to twenty years had a record of monks abusing boys, there being a cover-up and then the police having to expose what was going on. What was quite interesting was that most of these cases were as recent as 2007, 2009 and 2012.

Meetings with former pupils

11. I have to say that the strength of the testimony from the outset was the thing that struck both of us. After one of the meetings we had, maybe about only two months into the investigation, we both came away and sat in the car and had a chat about it before we drove back to Glasgow. We both said that we didn't think we had heard anything like that before. There was nothing in that testimony, which lasted for about three hours, that suggested that this person was in some way exaggerating what they were saying,

or trying to emphasise to us how significant it was. It was all done in a very sort of matter-of-fact, almost kind of clinical, way. This man also told us that he had a brother and we asked him if his brother would be interested in speaking to us and he put us in touch with him.

12. The first steps were fairly tentative in terms of getting information from the people we were speaking to. We asked if they could remember other people that were around at the same time, if they had an idea where these people lived, and whether they had old school photographs we could go through. That worked very successfully. The man with whom we had had the three-hour meeting, provided us with a photograph of Carlekemp and he had identified the names of the boys in the photograph that he could remember. The photograph was very helpful because it had been taken at the start of the year, which was a standard thing they did every year, so it had all the pupils and staff at the school, both lay staff and monks. We blew the photograph up so that we had pictures of the monks concerned. That was very helpful in going to other people and asking them if they could remember anything about these monks.
13. When we made contact with someone, we would explain to them how we had got their name, for example, it might have come from someone we understood had been in their class at school. The questions always had to be open-ended, because you were never entirely sure how someone was going to respond and you could never give away what had come from someone else. We would say to people that we were pursuing a series of allegations that there may have been physical or sexual abuse at the school around the time that they were there, and ask them if they had anything to say about that.
14. The initial contact was made by phone, or by letter if we didn't have a contact number. That first contact, particularly initially, was made in order that we could go and meet with them in person. You would perhaps hear something in an initial telephone conversation that was of interest, but if it was possible we would try and follow that up with a face-to-face meeting. The meetings were done on the basis that we were not recording them, but we would ask permission to take notes. We would always follow up the meetings by either Mark or myself writing to the individual to confirm that we

had had the conversation, that it would remain confidential and that we wouldn't be broadcasting any of it.

15. We had to be quite careful in the first instance not to push things too far because it became apparent to us that some of these men hadn't really talked about their experiences previously. These were men in their fifties and sixties, sometimes very well-educated; and the surprise was that they had managed to keep this quiet for so long.
16. In the first instance, our task was to try and speak to as many people as possible. Some former pupils said that we were barking up the wrong tree and nothing like that (physical or sexual abuse) ever happened. Some were quite aggressive, making allegations that we were anti-Catholic or that we were trying to damage the reputation of the school. That was just one of the things we had to take on board. It didn't really make any difference to us because our rule basically was that it was entirely up to each individual what they wanted to contribute.
17. After a period of about three or four months, it was quite clear to us that we had quite a big investigation underway and that we were probably scratching at the surface of something that was much bigger.

Fort Augustus online forum

18. One of the first people we spoke to alerted us to the fact there was a website that had an online Fort Augustus old boys' forum. A school roll from the autumn term of 1977 was available on the website. I basically tried to speak to as many of these boys as I possibly could, because it was in the 1970s that a couple of the more serious allegations had taken place. I have provided a copy of the roll to the Inquiry.
19. The forum mysteriously got taken down, but the person who told us about that had been quite clever and printed off a lot of the stuff. There had been a bit of a controversy that had sparked this off. In the year 2000, there was a book produced called [REDACTED], written by an old boy called [REDACTED]. It was meant to be a review

of the school, its history and the things that happened at the school. There was a bit of a backlash to that because it didn't appear to reflect what some of the old boys had experienced.

20. One of the old boys sent round an email to a substantial number of people that he had contact with and he collated the replies that alleged both physical and sexual abuse. These were then published on the forum. Individual monks were named, but I don't think any of the boys' names were mentioned. I think the forum was closed after that, but it has now been resurrected. This was a useful bit of information for us because it was completely independent, and it also indicated that the scale of the abuse was not only serious but had actually gone on for decades. Some of the individuals, whom we have now identified, were pupils in the late fifties and it became clear that this was systemic.

Rape allegation

21. We had one quite big breakthrough in the investigation. We had an address of a man but we weren't sure whether it was the right address, so Mark went to his house and knocked on his door. This man told us a story that elevated the scale of what we were doing onto a different level because it involved a rape allegation.
22. We left this case for nearly three weeks because, whilst this individual had said that he wanted to go public and talk about this on camera, 'in vision', not silhouette, his testimony was so serious that it was obvious in terms of broadcasting that this would be one of the big things that would be picked up on and would probably feature large any time Fort Augustus was mentioned. We left it for some time so that this man could have a discussion with his family about the implications of this. When we got back in touch with him, he said that he had discussed it with everybody and they were all fully behind him.
23. As soon as that happened and he gave us permission, we were then in a position to speak to some of the other men and say to them that we had someone who was prepared to talk about his experiences 'in vision'. In a sense that kind of tipped the

balance. Within a very short period of time, we moved from having a couple of people thinking about doing it 'in vision' to having confirmation that four would definitely do 'in vision' interviews and one would do it, if shot anonymously. That was then sufficient for us to be able to work out how we could actually make the film. There were lots of individuals who would have been keen to take part, but either through their own personal situation or the circumstances of their family, or other reasons, they declined to do so. But most contributed in other ways. In practical terms a number of them offered to provide us with some of their own photographs from their time at the school and also with background information on their peers and the culture of the school. This was invaluable. Their support was also re-assuring given the seriousness of the allegations that we were planning to broadcast and the inevitable controversy that we knew would follow. It helped confirm to us the importance of the story.

24. I think before the film went out we had accounts of about twenty former pupils who had experienced physical or sexual abuse. We were then in a position to say to the BBC lawyer and the commissioning editor that we had five contributors (four 'in vision' and one in silhouette) who would talk about their experience of abuse and others who could confirm from their own personal experience that this kind of thing was going on. Having that many people is unusual. It gives you an idea of the scale of it, the fact that it had been going on over a period of at least three decades, and, that a number of the monks were implicated.

Filming

25. I think we started the filming around the middle of May. We used the same cameraman throughout. We did three or four interviews within the space of a week. In some instances we brought people out of their own environment to locations that were neutral to them. We were very conscious of the sensitivity of the issue and of the significance of what we were asking them to do. We both felt a sense of responsibility in how best we could deliver their testimony.
26. Mark and I were on-call for the individuals who were taking part in the film from the time that they committed to doing the film until it was broadcast. There was probably

not a day went by where we didn't have some sort of contact with them. It was absolutely critical, from our point of view, that we offered them support and reassurance, but it was equally important that they didn't talk about this to anybody else before the film was broadcast. Our concern on that front was unnecessary because the people we finished up interviewing were absolutely full of integrity. All of them were doing it for the right reasons. They felt that they had to talk about this because they knew lots of it had gone on and talking about it could help others who were not in a position to come forward and speak.

27. I think because of that, Mark and I both felt quite secure about what we were doing and we were also quite secure that we were doing this simply as facilitators. In that sense, it was actually very easy to do the interviews because it was not as if we were prompting anybody. We were simply creating an environment where they felt comfortable enough to talk about their experiences. One of the most telling moments in all the time that I've worked in television was the reaction of the man when he was describing the rape allegation. There is a moment in the film when he sits back and closes his eyes and you can see that he was back to when it happened.
28. We were very careful about the language that we used in the original programme. For example, what we were hearing suggested that the abuse was systemic. It wasn't just a one-off and it wasn't just over a short period of time, but I don't think we actually used that term in the programme. Likewise, we never used the words "paedophile ring" in the film. We didn't use that language because we didn't want that to become the thing that the programme was remembered for. The impact we wanted the film to have was the very straightforward testimony of the individuals. This was a group of grown men talking very eloquently, and in a very reasoned manner, about something that happened to them in their childhood which had traumatised their lives. After the film went out, I think it became clear to us that it was absolutely systemic and probably that there was some kind of ring in operation. It is difficult to imagine that within a small monastic community that this kind of behaviour would have gone unnoticed and also unchecked.

MLL

29. There was one individual who did not appear 'in vision' in the film. He was very clear that he did not want his name to be used but he was equally clear that he wanted his testimony to be used. We changed his name to MLL and we used an actor. We spent some time with MLL. The way we approached this was that we met up with him, he had someone there with him to support him, and we recorded his conversation. The agreement with him was that we would send back the text we were interested in broadcasting for him to review. He then sent it back to us saying he was happy with it, and that is what we broadcast. None of it was changed. MLL alleged that he had been abused by Father MEV and that he had told his parents what had happened. They had met with SNR, Father MMF and subsequent to that meeting, Father MEV was sent back to Australia.

MLL

Lay teachers

30. One of the lay staff I spoke to is a former pupil of Fort Augustus. I contacted him during the research for the film and he basically said that, as far as he was aware, nothing untoward had happened. He talked very positively about things like Ian Botham, the cricketer, coming to the school and taking the boys on a kind of expedition as part of a charity walk he was doing from London to John O'Groats, and Fort Augustus was one of the ports of call. When the film went out, his view slightly changed and he then said that the fact he was unaware of abuse taking place, didn't necessarily mean that it did not take place.
31. I spoke to another lay member of the staff whose view of the school was that it was a "strange, strange place". That was his language. He said that academically the monks

didn't really know what they were doing and it was pretty "hopeless". The one critical thing that he provided, apart from being really helpful with photographs and names and so on, was that he said he had to provide records on a regular basis. He sent me a copy of a document which describes the curriculum for the school and makes a specific reference to "Parents receiving comprehensive reports on their son's progress at the end of each term". He has given me permission to pass this on to the Inquiry team. I established contact with this teacher after the film went out.

Benedictines/Catholic Church Hierarchy

32. Richard Yeo was the only senior Benedictine we had contact with in making the programme. He was sent the list of allegations in advance. The BBC protocol for this is that if you are making allegations in a programme, in the interests of fairness and impartiality, you have to send detailed allegations to the individual concerned and offer them the opportunity to do an interview or to provide a statement. If they don't agree to give an interview but provide a statement, you are then obliged to incorporate their written response into the film. I think Richard Yeo was sent the allegations about three weeks before the film was broadcast. He agreed to do the interview on the condition that he was allowed to say sorry.
33. Some of the concerns about allegations of sexual abuse raised in the film would not have been new to Richard Yeo. In the case of Father Aidan Duggan, described as a predatory paedophile by some former pupils, as early as 2004 he responded to a request for information about Aidan Duggan from the Archdiocese of Sydney in relation to a criminal case being brought against Duggan by John Ellis, who alleged that he had been abused by him. In 2010 and 2011, he engaged in correspondence and then with meetings with two men who alleged that they had been abused by Aidan Duggan at Carlekemp. I have been given permission by the owners of the letters to pass them on to the Inquiry team.
34. I think Richard Yeo's answers in the filmed interview were elusive. He did apologise. It surprised me that he hadn't taken the opportunity to look through the records. It also

surprised me that he seemed to indicate that there wasn't anything that could be done about this because the school and the abbey had closed:

35. He was quite elusive as well about another issue that we had brought up with him, which was about the presence of two [REDACTED] at Fort Augustus Abbey in 1997, Father Nicholas (Richard) White from Downside Abbey and Father [REDACTED] MYV a Catholic priest from [REDACTED]. The two men, complete with vestments, were included in a photograph to celebrate the [REDACTED] MFF [REDACTED]. In addition to Richard Yeo, the Bishop of Aberdeen, Hugh Gilbert, and former Archbishop of Glasgow, Mario Conti, were also present in the photograph. Richard Yeo in the interview indicated that he did know the two of them (White and [REDACTED] MYV) were there, and when asked by Mark Daly if he knew White was a paedophile, he said that he knew that there had been serious allegations made against him which had not been passed on to the police and, "It was wrong. I know that". Instead, White was placed on 'restricted ministry', a move which he denied was done to protect the reputation of the Church and the Benedictine Order but to provide White with 'a circle of support' from within the monastic community that would give him the support "he would need to avoid offending".
36. Father [REDACTED] MYV a priest from [REDACTED], had [REDACTED] his friend, the then Bishop of Galloway, in 1996, that he had abused several young boys in the early 1980s. Instead of reporting him to the police, the Bishop told local priests that he had given [REDACTED] MYV leave of absence as a sabbatical in Canada; which was partly true in that [REDACTED] MYV had been sent by Bishop Taylor to a clinic for sex offenders [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] Ontario. His story had made headline news in the [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. The Fort Augustus Abbey photograph, we established, was taken just two weeks later. We tried to get an interview with him but he refused: Mark finished up doing a doorstep of Father [REDACTED] MYV at the home which the Catholic Church had bought for him, but he wasn't there so it didn't really lead anywhere. The Catholic Church hierarchy in Scotland were quite reluctant to get involved when we contacted them, but Bishop Taylor provided a statement which was included in the film and observed that, "Things would have been done differently in some aspects if we had had the Guidelines for Safeguarding that the Church now operates with". Our contact

with Bishop Maurice Taylor was specific to the Father [REDACTED] MYV [REDACTED] case. I should add [REDACTED]

37. Father Nicholas (Richard) White was jailed for five years in 2012. What we didn't know until after the film went out was that Nicholas White had been moved from Downside Abbey, where he had confessed to the abuse, to Fort Augustus, probably in 1997, and then was returned to Downside Abbey about a year after that. The significant thing about this is that Richard Yeo was installed as the Abbot for Downside at that time (1998), a position he held until 2006. He also held the position of Abbot President of the English Benedictine Congregation from 2001. He was therefore a figure of very considerable authority. During this period the Catholic Church, in response to growing concerns about the number of sexual abuse cases it was having to deal with, had produced new safeguarding guidelines in 2001 (the Nolan reforms) with the promise of greater openness and transparency. Richard Yeo himself was a member of the Cumberledge Commission which published a report in 2007 which recommended, like Nolan, that allegations of abuse needed to be reported to the statutory authorities. It is puzzling then that he failed to follow those recommendations knowing from 1997 that White was a paedophile and that he should be handed over to the police. White in fact was not arrested until 2010 when the police, while investigating another matter, entirely by chance came across his case.
38. We also tried to get in touch with Father [REDACTED] MMF [REDACTED], former [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] at Fort Augustus. I think he was in Ampleforth Abbey. We wrote to him with the allegations that we were making against him which included his failure to report to the police the allegations of sexual abuse which had been made known to him by [REDACTED] MLL [REDACTED] parents. In a statement he apologised for any abuse committed by Father [REDACTED] MEV [REDACTED] but declined to make any further comment. A month after the film was broadcast he resigned his post as spiritual director of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] which we discovered included a safeguarding role for undergraduate monks. By that time we had been made aware of another sexual abuse case involving Father [REDACTED] MEV [REDACTED] [REDACTED] MEV [REDACTED] which had been brought to his attention. He failed to take action and the

abuse allegedly continued – this was prior to the allegations of abuse made by

MLL

Documents

39. I do not still possess any documents of relevance to the investigation. We had a rule that anything of a confidential nature was to be sent back to the original owner as soon as we had used it. Anything that hasn't been sent back would still be at the BBC.

Abuse

40. To date, I have spoken to over a hundred people who have told me about their experiences at Carlekemp and/or Fort Augustus, about half that number have described accounts of physical beatings and about half of that number have also mentioned sexual abuse. I don't know how many of those individuals have reported those events. Some of them don't want to be contacted again because they think it is not in their own interests to go back over all this again.
41. At the time of the programme going out, we had heard about physical abuse by Father MFE, Father MFF, Father MFG, Father MEW, MEW and Father MEZ, and we had heard about sexual abuse by Father MFA, Father Aidan Duggan and Father MEV. We also believed that the allegations of sexual abuse had been covered up by two SNR at the school, Father MKT and Father MMF.
42. Subsequent to the programme going out, we learnt of Father MEY and Father MFC both of whom we were told had been involved in physical and sexual abuse, and Father MRQ who had been involved in physical abuse.
43. There were lots of accounts of the canings and beatings that took place both at Carlekemp and Fort Augustus. It was so routine that there appeared to be a level of

acceptance that a regime of “harsh discipline” was something that you “survived” in the best way that you could. Most of the monks were known to be handy with the cane or the belt. But this was not unusual. Even some of the lay teachers were described in the same way. I think the thing that’s different here is that there was an expectation that the lay staff would behave in that fashion, because they were lay staff and had to impose discipline in the school. Whereas the monks were supposed to be running a Christian school, based on Christian ethics and principles.

44. The physical abuse at Fort Augustus was on a scale that I hadn’t really come across before. At the very outset, we did a bit of work on trying to find out where Fort Augustus fitted in on the scale of physical abuse at private schools. I phoned round some people that I knew who had gone to boarding schools in that era and asked them to tell me a bit about their schooling and the discipline that was involved. It was bad but nothing compared with what was going on at Fort Augustus. I think it was extreme in Fort Augustus even by the standards of the day. In terms of the sexual abuse, it was consistent with what had emerged was happening fairly recently in the other Benedictine schools, and in that sense it wasn’t unusual.
45. The people who talked about sexual abuse spoke of the contradiction between excessive physical violence and affection, which was absolutely consistent with what I had experienced before when investigating abuse cases. It became very clear to me and Mark that this combination of excessive violence and excessive affection was something that was consistent in a lot of the stories, particularly in Carlekemp.
46. To give an indication of just how flagrant and open it was sometimes, I heard about a child sitting on a monk’s lap and being “fiddled around” with when other boys were walking into the class. He didn’t stop when the boys arrived. I heard this from the boy it was happening to and from other boys who walked in and saw it. The ones who saw it spoke of how intimidating it was. These were boys who were eight or nine, trying to make sense of what was going on. In some instances they had only been at the school for a term and were unfamiliar with the routine of the place.

47. The man that this happened to mentioned it to me about three years after my first conversation with him. It came right out of the blue when we had been talking about a whole series of other things. He had never revealed any of that, because as far as he was concerned it wasn't on the same scale as what had gone on and been exposed in the film. His phrase, which still sticks with me, was, "It's the one thing that makes my stomach churn". He said that it had less to do with the physical abuse because everybody experienced physical abuse, but any time he thought about this, it made his stomach churn. It was yet another indication of just how powerful the suppression of this kind of experience has been. And also how you can't really anticipate how and when you are going to get this information.
48. There were two issues that we didn't touch on in the film, bullying and the homosexual behaviour between the boys. Neither bullying or the sexuality of the boys concerned were what we were looking at in the film. Post the film going out and certainly since the child abuse Inquiry was set up, bullying is now something that is talked about probably every time I have a conversation with someone. I think this is partly because of the publicity that has surrounded some of the other cases that the Inquiry has looked at. I think the bullying was horrendous and I think it was probably condoned by the staff at the school. It was also identified by some as a strategy for 'survival' where it was easier to accept that it was just part of the regime – you accepted the humiliations and the beatings knowing that, in time as you went through the school, you would be able to inflict the same punishment on those younger.

Impact of abuse

49. I think the other thing that is definitely a large element in all of this is the scale of trauma that these individuals have gone through. I know there are at least two suicides, both of which the family claim can be attributed to what went on at school. We couldn't run with that story because these deaths took place long after the event and it could be argued, quite correctly, that there are a whole series of other circumstances that could have amounted to suicide. However, both of the individuals talked about the abuse they had experienced and the lifelong problems which it had caused them before their deaths. These men took their own lives, others still suffer.
50. There are other people who will never come anywhere near an inquiry or a police investigation because they have been so traumatised that they couldn't face something like this. These are people who have experienced psychiatric problems throughout their adult life.
51. The impact is not just on the individuals concerned. I have come across families that have been destroyed. It is truly dreadful listening to that. Sometimes family members do not even know the source of the upheaval and only discover it much later on. Once that happens, they have to deal with the ramifications of that. They have to work out how to deal with it and how to find supports. There are people doing their best, even at this later stage, to try and find some kind of resolution. In circumstances where it has been discovered at an early stage, if it is not dealt with at the time, they are then left with decades of guilt about what has happened.
52. I had worked on investigations involving abuse before doing 'Sins of Our Father', but this was the first time that I had had such close contact with victims of abuse. It was good that Mark and I were able to use each other for support. We had that kind of relationship where we would unload on each other. I also had other people who could help. However, more than the actual abuse, the thing that struck me, and still strikes me, is the fact that silence was really important for these men. The suppression of that information for such a long period of time was sometimes quite staggering. Sometimes brothers wouldn't actually speak to each other about it. There are several examples of

older brothers being abused and having a younger sibling at the school, who was also abused, and they don't actually talk about it to each other. Part of that is because of the guilt the older brother feels for not having been able to protect the younger brother.

53. I think there were a number of reasons for the secrecy. One was that a number of the families that the boys were from were devout Catholics. It was therefore difficult for the children to speak to their parents about what had gone on because, in some instances, they knew they wouldn't be believed. Who would believe the word of a homesick boy over a holy man? The second issue is really around the isolation of the place. It's not unusual in terms of public schools for boys, or girls, to be taken away from their family environment, but Carlekemp and Fort Augustus Abbey School, in particular, were quite remote and I think when it is combined with the hold that the Catholic church had on the family, that was very difficult. It also appears to be the case that at Carlekemp letters were censored.
54. From the people that I have spoken to, it was not unusual to hear accounts of a family inviting a favoured monk either to their home or to accompany them on holiday. I can think of at least half a dozen of the monks going on holiday with families. There are two accounts that I've heard of boys who had been abused by a monk then discovering that they had been invited by their family to their home or to holiday with them. One of the monks was Father [REDACTED] MFC
55. There are also a number of instances of boys talking to their parents about their experiences at the hands of the monks and their parents either not believing them or accepting the decision of those responsible for the monks as to how it should be handled. For example, in our film the man who described being raped by Father Aidan Duggan told his parents about it but when he was called into the [REDACTED] SNR office, Father [REDACTED] MKT accused him of lying about the abuse and nothing was done. Years later, Father Aidan Duggan was sent back to Australia without any warning to the church authorities there about his behaviour. He continued where he had left off. Another example is that of Hugh Kennedy. He told his stepmother about Father [REDACTED] MEV and the incidents of abuse he had experienced. The [REDACTED] SNR Father [REDACTED] MMF was told. A meeting was held between the monk

monk and his stepmother and he convinced her that nothing of that nature had happened. Nothing was done and the abuse continued. It is alleged that he later went on to abuse [REDACTED] MLL before he too was sent back to Australia, again without any warning to the church authorities there of his behaviour.

Post-transmission of the film

Response from former pupils

56. After the film went out, we had a flood of calls and another flood of allegations. We had maybe about seventy-two hours of just being on the phone all the time. There were calls coming from Australia, America, South America, India, and this had all just been sparked off by the film going out. Some had already heard about the film, but I don't think they could believe that it was actually going to happen. They had kept the abuse to themselves for so long that they didn't think it was ever going to be talked about.
57. The one big difference between pre and post the transmission was that when we made the film, the focus was pretty much around Fort Augustus Abbey School because that's where the testimony had taken us. When the programme was transmitted, the response that we had was overwhelming and it clearly indicated that both sexual and physical abuse was absolutely rife at Carlekemp, on a scale that was staggering.
58. The three principal perpetrators were Aidan Duggan, [REDACTED] MEY and [REDACTED] MFA. [REDACTED] MFA In terms of the accounts that we have been given, both from Carlekemp and Fort Augustus pupils, Aidan [REDACTED] were identified as predatory paedophiles. There are a lot of stories about [REDACTED] MEV at Carlekemp, but as far as I am aware, none of the individuals have come forward and said that they were sexually abused by him. That might not actually be the case because I have not asked them about this if they have not volunteered that information to me.

59. I think we put out another three broadcasts with interviews in the immediate aftermath of the film. These were all news programmes on the BBC. We interviewed Hugh Kennedy, who was someone that we hadn't spoken to before the film went out. That was significant because he was before [REDACTED] MLL and that confirmed what [REDACTED] MLL family had told me, that there had been an indication previously that Father [REDACTED] MEV had been involved in something.
60. Another interview was with a man called [REDACTED] who had contacted us from [REDACTED]. He came over to Scotland on holiday and I did an interview with him in Rothesay. He talked about Carlekemp and the abuse he had suffered there at the hands of Father [REDACTED] MEY and there was another flood of calls as soon as that was broadcast from people who recognised him.
61. I think if we had made another film six months after the first film, it would have been about Carlekemp and then Fort Augustus, because the issue that emerged was that as the boys got a bit bigger and a bit more robust, they were less of a target than the seven, eight and nine-year-olds. Some of them were a bit more savvy as well and had already worked out strategies for dealing with what was going on, both with the physical and sexual abuse. That became quite an interesting part of their story. They weren't actually in school for education, they were in school to work out strategies to avoid either being abused by the monks or being abused by the older boys at the school.
62. One or two of the people who had told us that we were barking up the wrong tree came back after the film went out saying that they could recollect some events. One chap said he thought [REDACTED] MLL might have been in his year at school and described how he was horrendously bullied. The rumour had gone round the school about what had happened to [REDACTED] MLL and because he was then returned to school, he was subjected to three years of being bullied. I think this person was trying to be as helpful as he could when I spoke to him initially, but he had not revealed that about [REDACTED] MLL in the previous conversation.

Public response

63. The film was given extensive media coverage. From our perspective it was a very big Scottish story. The BBC ran it as a news story, effectively as a lead story, probably every day for maybe about a week after the film went out. One of the Children's charities, Children 1st, set up a helpline number for former pupils and, with the NSPCC and the Children's Commissioner for Scotland, called for a full independent review of what had gone on at the schools. The Scottish Labour Party and the Scottish Liberal Democratic Party called for a public inquiry as did Lord Carlisle of Berriew QC, who had been the author of a very critical report in 2010 on the handling of abuse allegations at the Benedictine school at Ealing Abbey. Police Scotland put out a request more or less immediately for people to come forward. The Benedictines said that they would conduct an inquiry themselves, as long as this didn't preclude or get in the way of the police investigation. The response from Bishop Gilbert of Aberdeen was just an apology in the same way Richard Yeo had given an apology. It was an apology on behalf of the Catholic Church. It was really not much more than that.

Further news stories

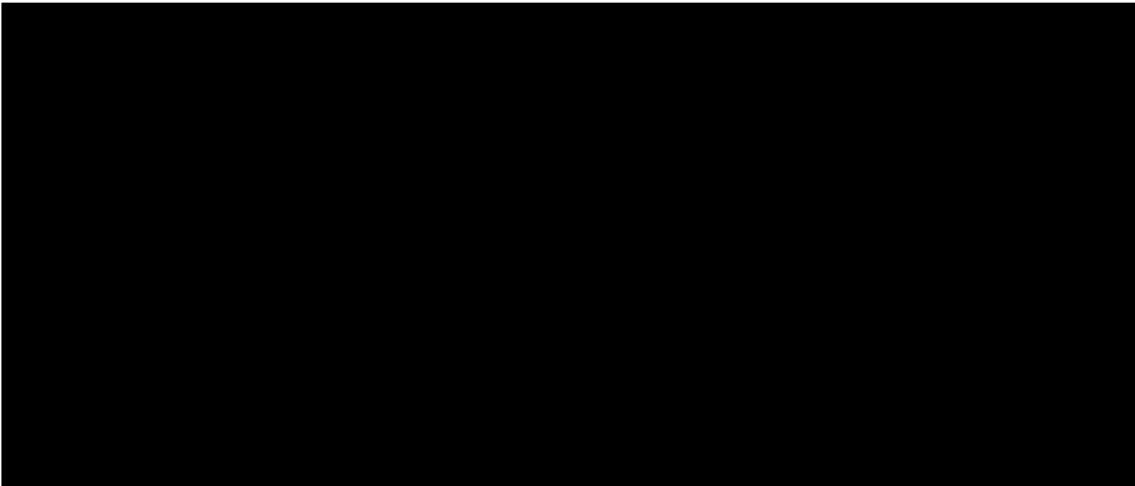
64. It was fairly obvious that it would be unlikely for us to be able to make a similar film again with basically more testimony around the same issues, partly because there was a police investigation underway. I think Mark and I both felt that the least we could do as journalists, because of the trust that these men had placed in us in the first instance to tell the story, would be to try and follow this up in some way. Unfortunately, a lot of the individuals that came forward spoke of perpetrators that were dead, so basically we just became like a form of therapy until such times as the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry was set up. That then provided another vehicle that could be used by those individuals to have something put on record.
65. By maintaining contact with those who came forward and by continuing to keep across the story after the transmission, Mark has over the years ran a number of news stories around the repeated delays in the criminal cases and the frustrations of those who came forward in good faith in response to the police appeal for evidence in 2013.

Father [REDACTED] MFC [REDACTED]

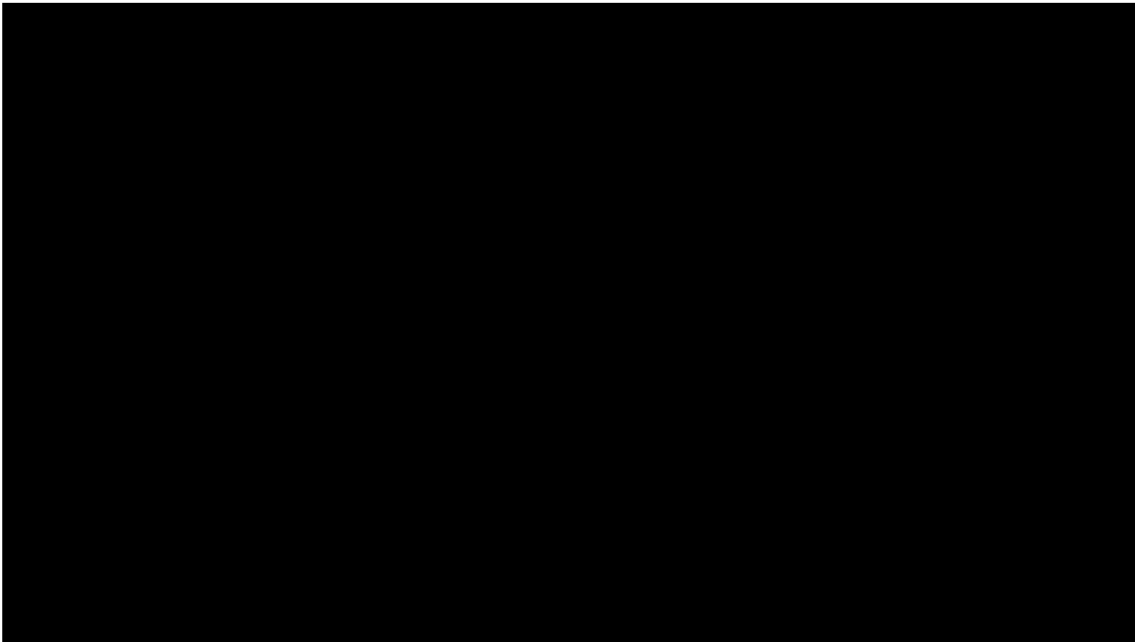
66. It came to our attention after the film went out that someone had alerted the police in 2009 or 2010 about an allegation of sexual abuse against Father [REDACTED] MFC [REDACTED] dating back to the early 1980s. For whatever reason the police had not pursued the case and the person heard nothing further from them. I first spoke to this man when he got in touch saying that he wondered why this monk's name had not been mentioned in the film. His case had become part of the investigation that had been undertaken by the police shortly before the film went out. We also heard of other cases of physical and sexual abuse over a period of more than twenty five years, again with the extremes of affection and kindness (giving little gifts and cards and photographs with very personal messages written on them) to violence and loss of control. There is an account from one former pupil who confronted him when he was in his twenties about the abuse at the schools. He replied, "That will haunt me till the day I die" or words to that effect.
67. Father [REDACTED] MFC [REDACTED] is now in [REDACTED] in Canada, and, as far as I am aware, is subject to an extradition order. The information I have been given is that he was involved in [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
68. There are a couple of curious anomalies in the story about [REDACTED] MFC [REDACTED]. We pursued a number of different lines of inquiry when we became aware of the allegations about him after the film. I think he left Fort Augustus in 1988 before the school closed. He had been there since the early 1960s, both at Carlekemp and Fort Augustus, so he was a long-standing member of the institution. He had left quite suddenly, according to the testimony of one of the boys who knew him quite well. The story being that he was going to stay with his sister in Canada.
69. We got an address for him through one of the pupils. He was in a small place in the middle of nowhere called [REDACTED]. We discovered that he had been a priest more or less immediately after he had arrived there. This seemed to be very odd because he

was a Benedictine monk and there appears to be no evidence of his having gone through the protracted process under canon law to become a parish priest. There is an extremely complicated process under canon law that has to take place before a monk can renounce his vows and become a Catholic priest. The Order has to accept the fact that the vows are going to be renounced and the Catholic Church has to accept that they will be ordained as a Catholic priest.

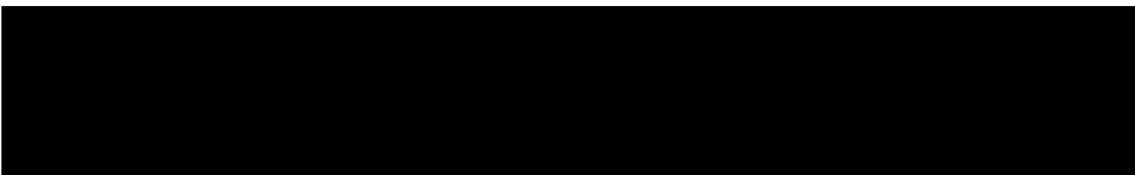
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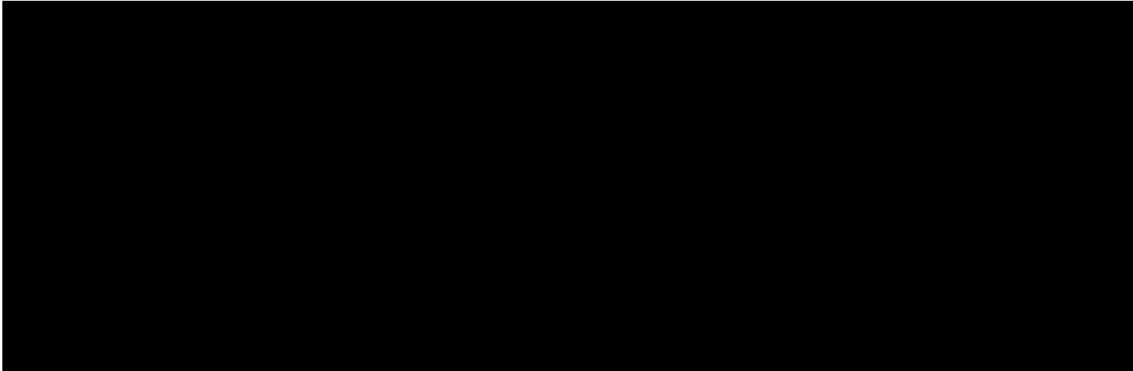


71.



72.



**Police investigation/COPFS**

73. I have not had any personal experience of the police investigation. Mark and I were both approached at one stage and we said that we would do as much as we possibly could to help out, albeit a lot of information was obtained on a confidential basis, and we heard nothing further from them.
74. I don't know how many of the individuals that I have had contact with have provided statements to the police. It is not my place to be asking them that. We were never in a position to say to individuals that they should go to the police. The line we took was that we would say to people that this could be of interest to the police but it's entirely up to you to decide whether you want to do that. We would facilitate it by making sure that they had the number to contact the police.
75. Some individuals have told me about their experience of dealing with the police and it has been truly awful in some cases. Sometimes phone calls were made to me by individuals, and I suspect also to Mark, saying that the police had turned up and they didn't know anything about the case. People were being asked to go through something and then having to go through it again. On other occasions, their experience of the police was very good. They were well-briefed, they were sensitive, and they were aware of the implications of what they were doing.
76. There seems to be some kind of problem with keeping the individuals who came forward in response to the police request in 2013 informed about the cases. The police are perfectly correct to maintain the line that this must not get in the way of any future

court case, but people are not looking for information of that sort. It is something much more basic than that. It is about keeping people informed of progress and if no progress is being made, simply saying that. The difficulty in not doing this is that those individuals then feel that the trust they placed in the criminal process is now being put at risk, in the same way they were placed in the trust of the Catholic Church and that was betrayed. They have put themselves forward at a later stage in their life and then are left feeling betrayed again. It is a really difficult position for people to be put in.

77. In relation to delays by the Crown, it is curious that, for a period of about two or three years, every time we alerted them to the fact that a news story about delay in a case was going to be broadcast there would be some movement in the Crown case very shortly afterwards. Perhaps this is giving us too much credit, but I think there is maybe something in this.
78. I have done an investigation timeline, a copy has been given to the Inquiry, where I have noted examples of this happening. In [REDACTED] the BBC informed the Crown that it was planning to run a news story about the delay in pursuing serious allegations of sexual abuse by [REDACTED] MEV [REDACTED] and told them that we were going to have an interview with one of the individuals, Hugh Kennedy, who had come forward. On [REDACTED] which was within days of being informed of the news story, the Crown announced the start of the extradition proceedings against [REDACTED] MEV [REDACTED] MEV [REDACTED] Hugh Kennedy had been informed by the Crown two days earlier that there was "no progress to report" on the case.
79. The following year, [REDACTED] the BBC ran a news story about concerns by the Crown in prosecuting the cases at its disposal, including that of [REDACTED] MEV [REDACTED] MEV [REDACTED] This was like a re-run of events the previous year. The BBC ran the story with an interview from an exasperated victim, Hugh Kennedy, and quotes from a defiant [REDACTED] MEV [REDACTED] in Sydney, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] We had done a doorstep with him and that is what he said. The Roman Catholic Church in Sydney also denied any knowledge of extradition. Then, six weeks later, and again without any hint of movement in the case from the Crown to the victims, [REDACTED] MEV [REDACTED] was

[REDACTED]. It is difficult to know what comes first here but it does seem very odd. It appears to be a news story that is creating an agenda before there is action taken.

80. The situation with the extradition is [REDACTED]

81. [REDACTED]

82. The shocking thing about this is that this information was passed on to a member of the Australian media and literally days before that there was nothing coming from the Crown to an inquiry from Hugh Kennedy. It just doesn't seem either right or fair that victims are left in this position where it appears they have to rely on a media intervention to get news.

83. Hugh Kennedy has a victim liaison support worker from the Procurator Fiscal Service. This person doesn't contact him. He has to pursue the information and Hugh has done that assiduously. He always copies me and Mark into his emails, so they are aware

that the BBC is being informed about what is going on. Some of the replies I have seen are incredulous. They do not appear to take into account the stress and vulnerability that these individuals are experiencing. It is quite disturbing that in October 2014, the Lord Advocate Frank Mulholland QC announced new training for the Crown and Procurator Fiscal Service in dealing with historical sexual abuse, yet it appears that, even at the most basic of levels, victim support is still non-existent. The same applies to the police, although there might be an excuse for them because the scale of abuse investigations that they are undertaking now is colossal. The Crown, however, should surely be taking this into much more serious account than they are doing at the moment.

84. The delay in the criminal proceedings is actually getting in the way of what I think might be an outcome for these cases. None of these people are interested in vengeance. It is actually more prosaic than that. It is about being able to sit with this person in front of them, having their day in court, even if the jury finds them not guilty. It is as simple as that.

Records

85. One of the things that I thought was really shocking was when Richard Yeo gave his testimony to the child abuse Inquiry and talked about the lack of records both for the staff and for the pupils. St Benedict was known for record-keeping. Scholarship, the whole idea of education and committing things to writing, was central to the Benedictine tenet. So the idea that a place like this wouldn't have records and then if they did have records, they would destroy them was just perplexing. I sent one of the lay teachers that I had spoken to the transcript of Richard Yeo's evidence and he responded immediately sending me a photocopy of a note from the 1980s about the Curriculum and the importance of academic record keeping.
86. One of the issues in relation to the records refers to Father Aidan Duggan. The background to Aidan Duggan was that he left New Norcia Abbey in Western Australia with MEY and MEV. They went to America and then

all found their way to Fort Augustus. Aidan Duggan arrived in 1954 or 1955. MEY MEY came shortly after that and MEV came in 1960. So the three of them finished up in Carlekemp and Fort Augustus together. Aidan Duggan was moved at one stage to Stanbrook Abbey to become a chaplain to the nuns there, and then he returned to Fort Augustus before being sent or returning to Australia in 1974.

87. In Richard Yeo's testimony to the Inquiry, he describes Aidan Duggan, although he doesn't name him, as a "difficult person". That was the phrase that he used. He also refers to the fact that he had only come across the name of Aidan Duggan because an allegation against him had been made to him and because he had remembered the name, he had managed to find a single record about Aidan Duggan. When he was interviewed by the BBC in 2013 he would have known that there were at least three allegations made against Aidan Duggan.
88. One of Aidan Duggan's victims when he returned to Sydney in 1974 was an altar boy called John Ellis. John Ellis was a contributor to the film and he and I have been in fairly regular contact since 2013. John is now a child abuse lawyer and has given testimony to the Royal Commission, partly because of his case against the Catholic Church and Aidan Duggan. He lost the case in 2007 – 'the Ellis Defence' as it became known was a triumph for the Catholic church and its most senior figure, Cardinal Pell, as the ruling made it impossible for abuse survivors to sue the Church. One of the recommendations of the recent Royal Commission in Australia is to annul the 'Ellis Defence' with New South Wales the first state to do so. In December 2018, Cardinal Pell was found guilty of five charges related to sexual abuse.
89. John Ellis contacted the Benedictines before his case came to court to try and get information about Aidan Duggan. He managed to get access in 2004 to correspondence between Abbot Holman in Fort Augustus and Cardinal Freeman who was in charge of the archdiocese of Sydney. There is an appendix as part of his court case which indicates that there was repeated correspondence between the abbot and the cardinal about Aidan Duggan and MEY MEY. The thrust of it was that Aidan Duggan and MEY MEY wanted to set up a Benedictine chapter in Sydney in MEY and this correspondence went on because of the extremely complicated process

under canon law that has to take place before a monk can become a Catholic priest. Richard Yeo is a canon lawyer and he knows that such correspondence has to take place. John Ellis' case was against the Catholic Church because by that stage they had accepted Aidan Duggan as a Catholic priest. With John Ellis' permission, I have provided copies of the Aidan Duggan biographical notes; the 1976 letter from Abbot Holman to Cardinal Freeman with an enclosure of his [REDACTED] letter (reply) to Aidan [REDACTED] [REDACTED] the October 2004 letter from Abbot President Richard Yeo to Monsignor Rayner from the Archdiocese of Sydney.

90. I think it would be useful if Richard Yeo explains why there appears to be no correspondence between the abbot at Fort Augustus and the Catholic Church in Australia, when in fact there is already documentary evidence that correspondence exists and has been made available in [REDACTED]. This is information you would have expected him to know and talk about when he appeared in the BBC film in 2013 and four years after the abuse allegations had been made public when he gave evidence to the Inquiry in June 2017. Might it also not be reasonable to expect, given the seriousness of the allegations made against Aidan Duggan, [REDACTED] MEY [REDACTED] MEV [REDACTED] and also [REDACTED] MFC [REDACTED] in Canada that Richard Yeo, on whose watch this had been uncovered, would have done everything in his power to gather together as much information as possible about these alleged paedophiles?
91. John Ellis has also shown me a letter, from 2004, from Richard Yeo indicating to a senior prelate in the archdiocese in Sydney that Aidan Duggan had Alzheimer's and therefore he could not pass on his records to the archdiocese because he did not have Aidan Duggan's consent to do so. This would assume then that records did exist.
92. The other important omission in Richard Yeo's account of Fort Augustus was that there was one person still alive who could have, and should have, provided a lot of the answers to the questions asked at the Inquiry. This was Father [REDACTED] MMF [REDACTED]. I think it is very curious that [REDACTED] MMF [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] was not part of Richard Yeo's explanation of what went on at the school, because he was at the school and he was aware of some of the allegations that had been made. He would

also have been aware of the records that were kept. Richard Yeo said that because he himself was not around at the time and because the school had closed, he was not in a position to answer many of the questions posed. I think that was deliberately misleading because there was an opportunity for someone else to provide that information. Unfortunately, [REDACTED] MMF [REDACTED] is now dead ([REDACTED] 2018). But there are others who would have been able to assist him. For example, Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] had been at the Abbey since the late 1950s and was made [REDACTED] SNR [REDACTED] 1985 and would have known all the key players in this investigation. It can only be assumed that his personal and long-standing knowledge of how the place was run was not brought to the attention of the Inquiry in June 2017 because Father [REDACTED] MRQ [REDACTED] had been found guilty of physical abuse at the Abbey school a month earlier.

93. Another issue from Richard Yeo's testimony to the Inquiry is that when he was asked about personal files which he had said were in Edinburgh, he told the Inquiry that he hadn't yet looked at the pupils' files. When we did the interview with Richard Yeo for the film, he said there were records held in Edinburgh and he hadn't had the opportunity to consult them. This is astounding, we made the film in 2013 and in 2017 he still hasn't looked at the records.
94. Richard Yeo's evidence to the Inquiry regarding the monks' files was as follows:
95. A. *"... As regards monks, there seems to have been a policy that when a monk died or when he left the monastery that his personal file was destroyed because the files which I received when the monastery was suppressed relate only to monks who were living as monks at Fort Augustus when the monastery was closed.*
96. Lady Smith: *Is that normal practice in the congregation?*
97. A. *I don't think so but I wouldn't really know.*
98. Lady Smith: *It seems a terrible shame.*

99. *A. It is not a practice in the monasteries which I know about, though I would add that personal files tend to be pretty skimpy”.*
100. Richard Yeo is saying that the files of people like Aidan Duggan, MEY, MEV and MFC would be destroyed as soon as they left the monastery. But on the other hand he managed to find a record about this “difficult person”. His answers are contradictory, which suggests to me that the answers provided are, at best, misleading.
101. As far as I am aware, there were two reports submitted by the Benedictines to the Inquiry, one on Carlekemp and one on Fort Augustus. A legal firm had compiled the reports and I think Richard Yeo was involved mainly in the one on Fort Augustus. The impression left at the Inquiry was that the legal firm had conducted a fairly serious search of the records in order to prepare the reports. Subsequent to Richard Yeo appearing at the Inquiry, a number of men submitted requests to the legal firm under data protection legislation to access their records. Very often the reply they got was that there were no records, and when that was pursued, they were told that there might be some records at Downside, which was followed by a further reply saying that there were no records at Downside so there are no records. The men were asking about detailed information which really should have been available to the legal firm if they had conducted a thorough investigation of the archive. That information should more or less have been to hand if that had been the case. I therefore have some doubts about whether the legal firm conducted this research. If it was done, it was cursory at best.
102. In other cases where individuals obtained their records most of the information was completely redacted. I have seen records for someone consisting of six pages and everything is blank except his name at the bottom of a page.
103. I think that the situation with the records is something that needs clarified. It may well be that the records went down to Downside, because in the English Inquiry it was revealed last year that the headmaster of Downside had used a wheelbarrow to destroy some of the records there. There was a room in a basement that had some of

the records in it and it was a bit untidy, so he decided to clear this up and just destroyed them. Would that have included the records from Carlekemp and Fort Augustus?

Ongoing contact with former pupils

104. I am in regular contact with over thirty people, all of whom have experienced physical abuse and some of whom have experienced physical and sexual abuse.
105. The contact I have had with these thirty or so people over the course of the past five or six years has been to alert them to things like the child abuse Inquiry. When the Inquiry was set up, I sent out some details and let people know that the Inquiry appeared to be interested in hearing from them even in cases where the perpetrator was dead, and I left it at that.
106. The contact is mainly in the form of emails. I drop them a line if there is anything happening in terms of the cases. I just send out an email to everybody. At Christmas there, because it was getting near the second anniversary of MEV being [REDACTED] there was a kind of flurry of interest so I have had phone calls as well as emails about that. The contact now is less to do with me being a journalist and more to do with just being someone to have a chat with. And that is the way I see it as well. There are individuals whom I have met through this process that it's been a privilege to meet, individuals who have come through this and seem to be really good people. I think that is something I have held onto as a human being, not as a journalist.
107. It is not about people giving me something that is going to make another programme. But I would like to think that if either of the two cases came to court, it would be an opportunity to do something, possibly another programme which I would do for the BBC. The BBC quite rightly have ownership of the story. They committed themselves to it and they stayed with it as well, which is great because that is what you need.

Hopes for the Inquiry

108. I think that there is absolutely nothing wrong with people being brought up to have a particular faith or set of beliefs, but that shouldn't be to the detriment of their health and wellbeing as they are growing up. I think there has to be some form of proper governance for these places. I think what manifestly failed with the Benedictine monks was that they were not trained teachers, they were not educators and they were not people that should have been invested in the trust of other people's children. I think to protect children now and in the future, there should be some kind of independent authority whose responsibility it should be to make sure that safeguarding is properly adhered to.
109. In relation to the Crown's level of communication with survivors, I think if the Inquiry can expose and reveal some of the inadequacies of the way that the system operates at the moment, but with a view to trying to work out how to proceed thereon, then I think it would be doing an absolutely invaluable service.
110. I have heard from John Ellis about how some of the victims have responded to the Royal Commission. For some, giving their testimony, even if anonymously, has transformed their lives. People are, however, investing a lot in the Inquiry in the hope that it actually delivers something. Giving the testimony is a vindication and a validation on their behalf that they were not alone in this experience, but I think all of them collectively would hope that this would make a difference to the way that things proceed from now on. They don't really want to talk about the abuse and the trauma in their lives unless they think there is going to be some kind of outcome. That is the motive of most of the people that I've spoken to. It is not going to be good enough simply to have testimony there so that other people who are abused in the future can realise they are not alone in this. There has to be some way that the Inquiry, the Crown and the police deal with this.
111. I have been really impressed by the way that the Royal Commission in Australia conducted their business. I think it is a really good example to follow because they published information as the process was going on, instead of waiting until the end. I

would hope that the inquiry team would think about doing the same and put things out as soon as they are in a position to work out different ideas and strategies. The Royal Commission was putting information out on the kind of things they were looking at, for example, forms of support mechanisms and a compensation scheme, and this was done almost as a kind of integrated part of the Commission. It wasn't enough just to have people turn up and give evidence, they were actually looking at the bigger picture and what they were trying to address. Essentially, it is all about communication. Sometimes even being able to say 'actually we don't know what the right way forward is here, but these are the things we want to have a look at' is enough. That is at least honest.

112. I have no objection to my witness statement being published as part of the evidence to the Inquiry. I believe the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed..........

Dated..... 22/02/19