



Dear Reader

I attended parts of the Carl Beech trial earlier in the summer and to say that it was an eye-opener is an understatement. The scene outside Newcastle Crown Court was awash with satellite vehicles representing the mainstream media. In court, most of the national press and television broadcasters dispatched journalists to cover the trial. Live twitter feeds were disseminated throughout the trial; the Times newspaper covered the case in separate articles, normally released at 1.00 pm followed by an early evening press release. One day, the man who I had been reading about since he first reported allegations to police, after Tom Watson rose to his feet in Prime Minister’s Question Time in October 2012 and announced that he had evidence about an establishment paedophile ring based in Westminster, was sat in the dock immediately behind me. It felt surreal. Following the conviction of Carl Beech in July 2019, the Metropolitan Police Service has faced intense criticism for the disastrous Operation Midland (which you can read more about elsewhere in this newsletter).

To add insult to injury, the police watchdog, The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has declined to take action against investigating officers, including the senior command team, in an investigation that has cost the taxpayer over £4.5 million. Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe (former head of the Met) now sits in the House of Lords. Cressida Dick, who led the original investigation into Nick’s claims, is now the Commissioner for the Metropolitan Police; former Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Steve Rodhouse, is now head of operations at the National Crime Agency. Sir Richard Henriques, a former senior High Court judge has declared that the warrants to search the properties of the accused may have been obtained unlawfully after officers misled the court. The inquiry into the astonishing failures of Operation Midland is widely accepted by the media as a whitewash. The Henriques’ report has pinpointed 43 serious police failings. Describing the operation as deeply “flawed,” he concluded that it was “difficult to conceive that no misconduct or criminality was involved by at least one police of-

ficier.”

Former Home Secretary David Blunkett, writing in the Mail, expressed his astonishment at the IOPC investigation: ‘Never for a moment did I imagine such a whitewash. When I called in this newspaper two months ago for full publication of the Henriques report into Operation Midland – that disastrous investigation by the Metropolitan police into a non-existent VIP paedophile ring – I was certain that action would follow ... It did not seem remotely possible to me (that) the police complaints body could continue to ignore its findings.’

This story will run and run. The metropolitan police service are in crisis following what was one of the most intensive investigations into false, non-recent allegations of child sex abuse, torture and murder. To reiterate, Sir Henriques has accused police officers of using false evidence to obtain search warrants to raid the homes of the prominent people wrongly accused by Carl Beech. We should not forget that false allegations do result in miscarriages of justice. In consequence, the BFMS recently submitted a detailed representation (published in full in this newsletter) to the All Party Miscarriages of Justice Commission which has convened a number of evidence sessions in the House of Lords. In our Members’ Forum, you can read about one family’s harrowing encounter with the criminal justice system following false-memory-type allegations.

(Dr) Kevin Felstead

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2019 BFMS Annual General Meeting and Conference

The 25th annual general meeting and conference took place in central London on 6 April 2019. Our keynote speaker was Sister Frances Dominica. Frances is currently the President of Falsely Accused Carers and Teachers (FACT). Her talk was entitled *A Voice for the Voiceless*. Frances has led a very active life which she has devoted primarily to helping others. After initially training and working as a nurse she became a nun. In 1982 Frances founded the Oxford-based children's hospice, *Helen House* which would later become a model for other refuges all over the world. As a nun and humanitarian, she devoted her life to helping sick children and their families, specialising in palliative care. She later founded Douglas House providing sanctuary and care for people aged 16 to 35 with life-threatening conditions. She appeared on *Desert Island Discs* and in 2006 she was awarded an OBE from the Queen. She has received numerous awards and honorary degrees and a Lifetime Achievement Award.

In 2013, Sister Frances's world was turned upside down when she was falsely accused by two complainants of historic sex allegations. Her relationship with the hospice was terminated with immediate effect pending an 'investigation' into the allegations. Frances recalled how she had endeavoured to help a vulnerable young woman who used to slip into a trance-like state while recalling fantastical allegations about abuse by a cult. In November 2013, Frances was subjected to a police interview, under caution and put on police bail. She strenuously denied the allegations, which were eventually dropped by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in July 2014 on the grounds that 'there was insufficient evidence to proceed.'

Following the allegations, Sister Frances was not allowed to enter Helen and Douglas House while the allegations were investigated. Later – even though the CPS declined to prosecute – the ban remained in place and Frances was not allowed to return to the hospice. In 2015, Sister Frances resigned as a trustee of Helen and Douglas House. She continues to robustly maintain her innocence, commenting poignantly: "In this country you are supposed to be innocent until you are proven guilty. But in any safeguarding issue, it feels as if you are guilty until proven innocent."

Sister Frances strongly believes that the accused should not be named or identified when facing sexual abuse allegations, unless convicted. It is a perversity that the accuser can remain anonymous for life – whether the allegations are true or un-

true. This injustice drove Frances to proclaim in interview with the Guardian newspaper (2 April 2016): "I want to be a voice for the voiceless." This comment perhaps reflects her profound humanity and her commitment to supporting the work of FACT. On a personal note, I would like to state on the record that it is always an absolute pleasure to meet her whenever our paths cross.

Dr Laura Tilt, our second speaker, was recently awarded a Doctorate in the Centre for Criminology, Faculty of Law, at the University of Oxford. Her talk was entitled, *The Aftermath of Wrongful Allegations: addressing the needs of the wrongfully convicted*.

"I still replay a lot of things in my head. I shouldn't have experienced that in the first place, and because of that I keep going over it and trying to understand in my own head ... I have to live with it every single day. I have to live with it. I didn't do anything."

The quotation is from a victim of wrongful conviction. Dr Tilt's talk summarised her research on the falsely accused who had been legally exonerated. Homelessness, unemployment family and all manner of relationship breakdown were common features following the aftermath of a wrongful conviction. Shockingly, in 94% of cases, the wrongfully accused were claiming social security benefits (now Universal Credit).

Dr Tilt stressed that miscarriages of justice-type-cases comprise a distinct sub set whose needs and requirements do not easily fit into the models of mainstream service provision. These individuals suffer a complete loss of identity and experience discrimination at every level. In the current legal climate in the UK there is a real danger – particularly in non-recent sex allegations cases – of miscarriages of justice. Earlier this year, a cross-party working group was convened in the House of Lords to consider the subject. Subsequently a Miscarriage of Justice Commission was convened, also sitting in the House of Lords and chaired jointly by Baroness Stern and Lord Garnier QC, a former Solicitor General. I attended a number of evidence sessions. Individuals and organisations were then invited to make a written submission of no more 3,000 words by 16 September. You can read the BFMS submission on pp 4-8.

DIARY DATE

BFMS AGM and Conference

**28th March 2020
Central London**

Commentary:

The recovered memory debate continues in Europe: Evidence from the UK, the Netherlands, France, and Germany

Patihis and Pendergrast (2018) present evidence that in the US “the debate over repressed memories of childhood abuse is not resolved”. We supplement this statement and point to evidence that assumptions of repressed and recovered memories of childhood abuse are also still prevalent in Europe.

Primary research conducted by Shaw, Leonte, Ball, and Felstead (2017) helps to substantiate this claim. Theirs was the first study to systematically analyse a large database of cases from the UK in which the issue of false memory was raised. A random sample of 496 cases was analysed, from an archive of cases collected by the British False Memory Society since 1993 (BFMS) that contains over 2,500 cases. The BFMS is similar to the False Memory Syndrome Foundation in the USA. It is a charity that provides support to those who claim they have been falsely accused of a crime on the basis of a false memory, dealing mostly with claims related to historical child sexual abuse.

Claims of recovered memory occurred most often in cases where the accuser was a woman in her thirties who had attended psychological therapy and was accusing her now elderly father in his sixties of historical child sexual abuse. Analysis of the subsample of daughters accusing fathers (N = 153) revealed that 84.31% of the accusing daughters were reported to have undergone some sort of therapy. A wide range of therapy types was mentioned, including general psychotherapy, counselling, hypnosis, and regression.

Occupations of both the accuser and accused were also varied, suggesting that claims of recovered memories of abuse are not restricted to specific social strata. The study demonstrated that recovered memory, particularly of historical child sexual abuse, is a significant issue in the UK.

Already in 1997, a study on the acceptance of recovered memories in the UK by Gudjonsson concluded that “police, lawyers, judges and jurors appear reluctant to accept the testimony of accusers who claim recovered memories of sexual abuse” (Gudjonsson 1997, p.348). Although this sentiment appears to remain true, some of these cases still enter the criminal justice system every

year, often with experts and therapists being called to give evidence on the reliability of memory.

In the Netherlands, most cases involving alleged recovered memories no longer make it to court. This is probably a result of the governmental regulation “Investigation sexual abuse in co-dependent relationships” (*Aanwijzing Opsporing seksueel misbruik in afhankelijkheidsrelaties*) introduced in 1999, which states that, if a case involves a claim of recovered memory, the prosecutor should consult the Dutch National Expertise Group on Special Cases of Sexual Misconduct (*Landelijke Expertisegroep Bijzondere Zedenzaken*) before deciding whether to prosecute or not. This recommendation also applies to cases involving claims of memories of abuse before the accuser’s third birthday, and to allegations of ritual abuse. The Expertise Group is keenly aware of the risk of questionable therapeutic techniques resulting in the creation of false memories, and will therefore typically advise caution when it comes to these cases.

The fact that recovered memories no longer make it to court in The Netherlands does not mean, however, that the problem does not exist there. From 2011 to 2018, 13 new cases were reported to the Dutch equivalent of the BFMS, the Fictitious Memory Group (*Werkgroep Fictieve Herinneringen*; J.W. Oosterkamp, personal communication, 9 May 2018). Ten out of 13 alleged victims of childhood sexual abuse had been in some form of psychological therapy, ranging from Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) Therapy, to Reincarnation Therapy, to New Age Therapy.

Further, one case involving recovered memories has recently received a great deal of media attention in The Netherlands and Belgium. Belgian author Griet op de Beeck announced on a popular Dutch TV show (Slort & Boersma, 2017) she had discovered in therapy that she was sexually abused by her father from her fifth to her ninth year of life. She claimed that she never remembered the abuse until her therapist pointed out that her depressive and anorexic symptoms were probably the result of repressed memories of childhood abuse. In public reactions to her appearance on the show, other claims of recovered memories have emerged on social media. It seems that the myth of recovered memory could be making a comeback in The Netherlands.

Countries in Europe where psychoanalytic therapy is particularly popular, like France and Germany, seem even more likely to have high rates of therapists suggesting to patients that they may

have repressed memories of abuse, and to use recovered memory therapy. In line with this, criticism has recently been voiced about “how little French psychology and psychiatry experts know about memory” and the dire need for qualified memory scientists in French courts to combat controversial beliefs about repressed memories (Dodier, 2018 p.158). Further in support of this, there are a number of organisations that work almost exclusively with the issues of repressed memory therapy and recovered memories in France, including *PSYFMFrance*, *Alerte Faux Souvenirs Induits*, and *Mémoire Traumatique et Victimologie*. In Germany there is also an organisation dedicated to this issue: *False Memory Deutschland*.

Despite being widely criticised by most scientists who study memory, there is evidence that assumptions about repressed memories and the use of memory recovery techniques among therapists remain a prevalent phenomenon in parts of Europe.

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Call for Written Evidence

Executive Summary

Memory does not work like a video recorder.

Any mental health practitioner can unwittingly trigger false memory recall.

The impact of false memory recall can be catastrophic including family breakdown, false allegations and, in the extreme, miscarriages of justice.

1.False memory is the phenomenon in which a person is convinced a memory is true when it is not.

2.It was first postulated and diagnosed more than a hundred years ago. In particular, it is creating

severe problems in the field of alleged historic child sexual abuse.

3.The BFMS acknowledges and abhors the fact that there are many genuine cases of child abuse that may require the application of the criminal law.

4.However we know from working in this field for over 25 years that a number of people (mostly, but not exclusively, female) are ‘recovering’ memories of having been abused in childhood following counselling, psychotherapy, hypnotherapy or psychiatric illness.

5.Not surprisingly, such ‘memories’, if false, have severe consequences both for the person concerned and for his or her family and for the wrongfully accused.

6.It is not uncommon for a whole network of family relationships to be destroyed as a result.

7.The BFMS remains unique in that it is the only registered charity in the United Kingdom working to provide help and support in false-memory-type -allegations.

8.It is vital that we continue to provide support and reassurance to the falsely accused.

9.As the BFMS is only too aware, false memories may lead to miscarriages of justice and wrongful imprisonment.

10.Currently some of our members face the daunting prospect of entering the criminal justice system where they are contesting non recent allegations of child sexual abuse.

11.Typically, their accusers had no memories of ever being abused prior to receiving psychotherapy or hypnotherapy.

12.Our organisation has dealt with around three thousand cases in which our members have claimed that they were falsely accused of sexual abuse following therapy.

13.We operate a robust screening process and frequently reject cases which do not involve false memory ‘flags.’

14.The BFMS has a professional and scientific advisory board comprised of eminent professors of psychology, clinical psychologists and psychiatrists.

15.A number of our scientific and professional advisory board members appear in Crown Court as expert witnesses for the defence and for the prosecution.

16.In some cases an accusing person can fabricate abuse because of mental illness or for vexatious reasons, but our organisation has focused on those who began to recall and then to believe they were victims of events which never happened after

seeing a therapist or a counsellor.

17.The accused have no voice and no process to prove their innocence, other than through the criminal justice system when allegations result in prosecution.

18.The BFMS, with its Scientific and Advisory Board, has copious information on its website (bfms.org.uk) regarding the international scientific research, and findings, into the functioning of human memory.

19.We have previously written to Parliamentarians to inform them about the damage which is woven right through our system and needs recognising if change is to happen.

20.We warned that false-memory-type-allegations pose a threat to society.

21.On 27 October 2014, I wrote to Alison Saunders, Director of Public Prosecutions and to Chris Grayling MP, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice.

22.On 13 February 2017, I wrote to Yvette Cooper MP, Chair of the Home affairs Committee and to Dr Sarah Wollaston MP, Chair of the Health Committee.

23.We warned that if serious delusions, particularly of sexual abuse, are not recognised, a phenomenon is created which is similar to a runaway train.

24.Delusions will be confirmed by further therapy whether or not the therapist believes in the abuse.

25.There are no brakes on the train and this can only result in an ultimate crash with the patient, and other individuals, very seriously harmed.

26.And so it has proven with the disastrous police operations named 'Midland' and 'Conifer.'

27.The myth that trauma often causes the brain to block out memory for the event is, sadly, a generally accepted one.

28.The BFMS is working hard to educate the public about false memory.

29.As Director of Communications, I am a visiting lecturer to several UK universities where I have delivered numerous talks on the subject.

30.Therapeutically-induced false memories continue to pose a serious challenge to us as a charity and to society at large.

31.The BFMS continues to acknowledge and empathise with genuine victims of abuse.

32.Just because we are saying that *some* allegations are false does not mean that we are claiming that *all* allegations are false.

33.We acknowledge that child abuse is widespread.

34.In equal measure we are determined to raise

awareness and to educate about the very serious issue of false allegations, based on memories recovered in therapy.

35.We strive to provide support to innocent victims and their families and to reduce the number of miscarriages of justice stemming from false allegations.

36.We want to emphasise that we consider creating parity between mental and physical health and the promotion of the talking therapies by the Government is an excellent initiative.

37.However, given such an initiative, it must be appreciated that we are on the brink of the risks of damage to the public becoming infinitely worse if warnings are not heeded.

38.In psychological medicine a treatment can appear most impressive and convincing to the naive consumer and yet be completely wrong and deeply destructive.

39.Some therapists believe that many problems which present in adult life are a result of repressed memories of trauma, usually in the form of sexual abuse.

40.Based on highly controversial principles and diagnoses, this treatment incorporates a range of techniques which can broadly be described as 'recovered memory therapy' which is renowned for implanting false memories.

41.Denial of the capability of false memories being created within therapy is widespread.

42.It is claimed by the Government that "recovered memory therapy" is not recommended by NICE.

43.Organisations with an ethical duty to scrutinise practice claim that they do not work within the framework of "recovered memories."

44.Therapists claim that they do not practice recovered memory therapy, whilst at the same time some of them have been known to use therapeutic practices which have the capability of producing false/recovered memories.

45.The recent conviction of Carl Beech in Newcastle Crown Court is a case in point.

46.This case has exposed the shambolic state of affairs surrounding the investigations of historic allegations of sexual abuse in United Kingdom.

47.Beech was convicted of 12 counts of perverting the course of justice and of one count of fraud, after claiming £22,000 from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority.

48.After the jury returned guilty verdicts, Beech was sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment.

49.Excluding the cost of Beech's 10 week trial in Newcastle Crown Court (estimated by some legal

commentators to be in the region of 1.5 million), Operations Midland and Conifer have cost the taxpayer in excess of £4 million pounds.

50. This is a chronic waste of the public purse.

51. It also completely undermines genuine survivors of child abuse who in consequence may now be unwilling to report abuse through fear of not being believed.

52. Beech, also known as 'Nick', accused a number of prominent figures including: former Home Secretary Leon Brittan (who died with allegations hanging over him); Lord Bramall (a former head of the army); Lord Janner (a former Labour MP); Harvey Proctor (a former Conservative MP); and former Prime Minister, Sir Edward Heath (deceased, 2005).

53. Beech also accused, Sir Morris Oldfield, a former head of MI6; Sir Michael Hanley, previously Director of MI5 and Field Marshall Sir Roland Gibbs.

54. Beech accused the men of being part of an organised paedophile network responsible for rape, torture and murder.

55. "I was physically, emotionally and sexually abused by my step-father and a paedophile ring of 20 men," alleged Beech.

56. There was not a shred of evidence to support his fantastical claims, yet police stated in a press conference broadcast on ITV news in 2014 that his false allegations "were credible and true."

57. Carl Beech was in fact a perpetrator.

58. He pleaded guilty to possessing indecent images 'of the gravest kind.'

59. In his opening speech, Tony Baddenoch QC for the prosecution, said: "This case concerns the making of false allegations of the most serious kind."

60. "The false allegations include three child murders, multiple rapes, kidnapping and widespread sexual abuse against young boys. It is quite impossible to conceive of allegations of a worse kind to be made."

61. Beech claimed that he had suffered physical and sexual abuse, "including oral sex and rape" while young.

62. He told the Metropolitan Police Service that Lord Bramhall raped him repeatedly.

63. Beech accused former heads of MI5 and MI6 whom he claimed "were responsible for abuse and forms of torture" which included "electric shocks and having darts thrown at him."

64. Beech alleged further that he had been "taken to parties" where he was abused in a variety of locations.

65. These included: Dolphin Square, military barracks, the Elm Guest House, the Carlton Club, Heathrow Airport, London Zoo, Brighton, Edward Heath's house and on the yacht of the former Prime Minister.

66. The prosecuting barrister, addressing the court, said that the allegations made by Beech were "a complete fabrication." They are "incredible and untrue."

67. Beech claimed to have witnessed the murder of Martin Allen who disappeared in London in 1979, aged 15.

68. Kevin Allen, the brother of Martin, was contacted in 2014 by the Metropolitan Police Service.

69. He was informed that police had received information alleging that his brother had been abducted by a paedophile murder ring.

70. "The source of that false hope to Kevin," the prosecutor stated, "35 years after his brother went missing, was ultimately the false allegations of this defendant, Carl Beech."

71. In September 2015 Wilshire Police instructed Dr Rachael Hoskins, a criminologist, to look into the allegations against former Prime Minister, Sir Edward Heath.

72. Dr Hoskins concluded that the 'Heath Inquiry like the Westminster VIP Inquiry, rests with an over-active imagination.'

73. Dr Hoskins was given access to police interviews – which included allegations of murder and Satanic Ritual Abuse and child sacrifice.

74. She later wrote a detailed and comprehensive report and concluded that the allegations were fantasy-prone and based on uncorroborated 'memories.'

75. Dr Hoskins' report was reported widely in the press at that time.

76. Dr Hoskins stated: "I told them (the police) the claims were ludicrous. Allegations from Beech and the sisters about Sir Edward Heath and other public figures were the ravings of fantasists and frauds."

77. "Worse, I have established that the allegations against at least some of the people caught up in Operations Conifer and Midland are based on no more than two uncorroborated witnesses, whose claims of satanic abuse were made under the influence of controversial psychotherapists specialising in "recovered memories".'

78. "At least one of these witnesses was under the influence of hypnosis. I am profoundly disturbed. In 15 years of working as an independent police expert, I have never seen anything like it."

79. "My analysis took two months and led to a

40,000 word report, but I soon had profound anxieties.'

80. 'For I could see from the statements in front of me that key amongst those accusing Heath and others was the woman we are calling Lucy X, the woman who had made incredible allegations of satanic abuse described above; a woman whose evidence has been discounted as nonsense when she first presented it to the police in 1989, but had now re-emerged to damage the lives of the living and besmirch the reputations of the dead.'

81. "Carl Beech is the principle reason we have the vast - and I suspect ill-fated-Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse."

82. "He caused the waste of millions of pounds of taxpayers' money and ruined the lives and legacies of those he falsely accused, such as former Home Secretary, Leon Brittan, ex-Tory MP Harvey Proctor and D Day veteran Lord Bramall."

83. Throughout February 2012 to October 2016, Beech had 121 counselling sessions with Vicki Paterson.

84. Beech sent her an e-mail with a "body map" outlining his alleged injuries at the hands of his abusers. He colour-coded the body map to represent the injuries he said he had sustained.

85. These included: broken bones and wasp stings. He claimed that his abusers had inserted into him "various objects."

86. Paterson testified that she was profoundly shocked at the coloured drawings, but appears to have made no attempt to authenticate the veracity of Carl Beech's allegations.

87. Her web site is illuminating:

88. "I will listen in a non-judgmental way understanding your world from your point of view... The starting point is to build a collaborative and trusting relationship between us which should then allow you to acknowledge and talk about your feelings, however difficult or uncomfortable they are. Working in a supportive way, emotions from the past and present will be allowed to surface and aspects of yourself **which may have become hidden move into your consciousness... I believe that you are the only expert in your internal world and the only person who really knows how you feel.**"

89. This 'belief' is clearly problematic.

90. No evidence came to light that Paterson implanted false memories however, by accepting the veracity of Beech's claims uncritically, Paterson was effectively fostering his delusions.

91. The same can be said of the Metropolitan Police Service.

92. In counselling sessions with Paterson, Beech claimed that he was assaulted by a Saudi Prince and, as his delusions cemented, by a "foreign royal family."

93. Beech also made allegations in therapy sessions about Edward Heath, Harvey Proctor and Leon Brittan. When questioned by police why he delayed reporting, Beech responded: "I did not report sooner (the alleged abuse) because the group who abused me were very powerful men ... I have been in fear of my safety since the abuse started."

94. Northumbria police investigated Beech and immediately ascertained that the factual chronology outlined by Beech did not accord with the facts.

95. The point is this: any mental health, welfare or criminal justice professional can unwittingly collude in reinforcing false allegations of abuse.

96. However the creation of a false memory is correlated strongly with therapists who take a special interest in sexual abuse discovery and treatment.

97. Some therapists take the view that sexual abuse underlies a multitude of diffuse social and psychological problems.

98. They are inclined to interpret unhappiness in adults as an indication of sexual abuse and subtly or inadvertently in some cases convey their beliefs to their clients.

99. Other therapists believe overtly in repressed trauma and seek to 'recover' what they believe are repressed memories of abuse.

100. A number of therapists may claim to be recovered memory survivors themselves as a prelude to becoming a therapist in the field, or as a consequence.

101. Unfortunately, many of the books recommended in sexual abuse therapy training advocate using recovered memory techniques.

102. Many of the histories of abuse which act as a template for therapists' expectations are in fact recovered memory histories.

103. There is a real danger that therapists may operate according to false stereotyping of abuse when interviewing clients.

104. However grotesque and unreal the false claims emanating from recovered memory may be, it would be wrong to underestimate the emotional dynamics of recovered memories which serve as a powerful and cathartic force which convinces those caught up in it of the authenticity of the claims.

105. There needs to be widespread recognition of

what can go wrong in therapy.

106. Counselling and psychotherapy practitioners can cause immense harm to patients and families without it impacting at all on the practitioners or their organisations.

107. For example, if serious delusions are not recognised for what they are, the practitioner will not realise that the information being received in the clinical setting may bear little or no relation to what has really happened, or is happening, in outer reality, creating on occasions a most dangerous situation for the patient and other people leading to false-memory-type-allegations.

Recommendations

1. The CCRC ought to be more cognizant of false-memory-type allegations – particularly in their day to day investigation of non-recent sexual allegations. I recommend that the Commission suggests that the BFMS provide training to the CCRC about the dangers of false memory recall in non recent allegations of sexual abuse.
2. I recommend that the CCRC post information about the inherent dangers of false memory on its website.
3. I recommend the CCRC set up a specialized team comprised of psychiatrists, clinical psychologists and other mental health professionals to examine false-memory-type allegations.
4. More broadly, I recommend that the Commission liaise with government to push for statutory regulation of psychotherapy – including the introduction of PACE interviews to ensure that counselling sessions are conducted scrupulously.

MEMBERS' FORUM

A father gives his account of being on the receiving end of historic allegations and explains how he and his wife worked tirelessly to defend themselves.

Are you Martin Brown asked two ladies who came to our home? They then introduced themselves as police officers who cautioned me and arrested me on suspicion of sexually abusing my youngest daughter, then aged 36.

Taken to the police station processed and interrogated in the presence of a junior, inexperienced

solicitor for some 4/5 hours in total. Of course, I made all the mistakes possible, believing that this whole matter could be put to rest with open and honest explanations! How naive I was. With the benefit of hindsight, that was just what the officers desired: every point was turned around to paint me as the most dastardly abusive parent. Locked in a cell whilst the officers then held an informal interview with my wife Sarah (which they later denied had taken place), I went into shock. Finally, after some eight hours, I was released on bail.

Some weeks later I was recalled for a further interview concerning allegations by our eldest child. On this occasion I was accompanied by the solicitor of my choice and conducted a 'no comment' interview after providing a pre-prepared statement. Later I was charged with multiple rapes and sexual assaults ranging back between 25 and 40 years.

Thus began 22 months of nightmares in which we had many highs and lows. From the beginning I promised my solicitor I was not guilty of the charges. I also agreed that I would hold nothing back from him.

I have to be frank; it did take us a little to recover from the shock and horror of being charged. However following court appearances and a lengthy case conference with our legal team, we then got down to business.

Shortly after the initial allegations in the early 1990's we by chance heard an article on Radio 4 concerning False Memory Syndrome (as it was then known) and the rising tide of distrust in recovered memories. We contacted the programme who forwarded a copy of the script.

After my arrest I searched the internet and came across the BFMS; I contacted the society and spoke to Madeline who was a tower of strength. She helped us to focus and gave us directions providing huge support to both Sarah and me.

We quickly realised we needed to each carry a notebook to jot down recollections as soon as possible, even one by the bedside as we would sometimes recall things during the night but had forgotten by morning.

Sarah and I had to put emotion on hold, become analytical and clinical in our research. Police officers refused to contact our supportive daughter or the psychologist who had treated her in her teens. Later, when our non-accusing daughter contacted the officers she was told: 'you have been abused but you refuse to admit it.' Sarah and I had already prepared a time plan, which in the following months would grow and

positively bulge as we recalled events plus other points family, friends and old neighbours raised with us. One very important lesson that emerged was that our individual and collective memories did not work like a video recorder as we had expected.

Some background to the allegations. I worked in public service building a career and at varying periods worked away from home in other areas and countries.

I met my wife Sarah in the early 1960's at the local dance hall, just as she had divorced her first husband who had physically, sexually and emotionally abused her terribly. She had a daughter Beverley then aged around 2 & ½ years, who I later adopted. We married a couple of years later and had two daughters together, Eve and May. We have now been married more than 50 years and have a wonderful relationship with Eve, her husband and children.

Beverley, who was Sarah's first child, was a very difficult delivery involving prolonged labour and forceps. So much force was used that her head was misshapen for many months. Now we understand she was most likely starved of oxygen at birth with subsequent brain damage.

Bev did not enjoy her mother being shared with a man, which was perhaps understandable after witnessing her mother being abused. However, we persevered with her and we believed she had overcome her demons. Sadly, as the years progressed, we endured many difficulties and problems. When she was around 12 years old, we had to seek assistance via our GP who put us in touch with Social Services who were excellent. Bev spent periods away from home several times; initially we were encouraged not to contact her in any way. I had thought this was for a few weeks, however, Sarah was correct in recalling it was months not weeks. So much for memory. Bev did return home and we learned how to cope with her problems. Yet as we later delved deeper into our family dynamics, we uncovered some very disturbing details concerning Sarah's parents and their undermining of our relationship with Bev. Despite her claims, we had never hidden the fact I was not her natural father and dealt with the subject in an age-related manner. I recall a conversation with her following her return home on the subject of her father. How could I put the hurtful truth that her father came and asked for her to be adopted by me as he did not want to continue paying for her? Also, if he did not give her up, his new wife would leave him?

We explained we had a plan, assisted by Social Services, in what to do. We would need to locate

him, contact him for his agreement and begin with a short meeting etc. What occurred was that Sarah's parents had taken matters into their own hands; they took Bev to her father's home, pointed out the house and told her to knock on the door and meet him. Devastatingly for her he rejected her, and his wife slammed the door in her face.

The professionals were angry and in a frank meeting with Bev's grandparents advised in the strongest possible terms to desist their interference. We were later to uncover more disturbing facts which had caused Sarah much heartache.

Bev married Jim and they had two children together. However shortly following the birth of her first daughter, Social Services (SS) became involved due to neglect and mistreatment. She was struggling to cope. We offered assistance and worked with the SS until the family emigrated.

The allegations first came to light around 1990, shortly after I had suffered a life threatening and life changing accident and as my psychologist noted at a period when I was extremely vulnerable. Bev by this time had married and had two daughters; her sisters likewise had married with one child each. She had confided in May, her youngest sister, that I had abused her when she was a child. There was a meeting of the sisters, May believed her sister, Eve did not, thankfully.

Bev and her husband Jim emigrated to be nearer his brother; prophetically as we waved goodbye and knowing my daughter, I remarked 'Wonder what bombshell she has left behind her?'

It was some months later when on a visit to see May and her infant son that she told Sarah of Bev's allegations. Sarah, as can be appreciated, was devastated by the disclosure. May made it clear she expected Sarah to divorce me and was shocked when her mother rounded on her to make it clear she did not believe the allegations for one moment. Eventually, she explained to me what had transpired; to say I was shocked to the core would be an understatement.

I had written regularly to Bev, Jim and the children, enjoyed her letters in return not knowing of these allegations or that she was writing to family and friends claiming Sarah and I had not been in touch and cut her off. Totally untrue, but this was Bev up to her usual tricks.

Back tracking a little, when Bev was away in care of Social Services, we had seen a report that concluded she suffered from 'a damaged personality' and pathological lying (this was during the mid 1970's.) I suppose today Borderline Personality Disorder would be appropriate. This came as quite a shock to us, but we worked with the professionals and achieved, we thought, a good relationship with Bev – all be it, she did go off the rails in her mid to late teens. We had begun to

understand she would need continuing and continual support probably for the remainder of our lives.

Following May's revelations, we heard nothing from Bev despite writing many times until a letter arrived from Jim demanding money or he would go to the press. I did everything wrong at this point, wrote back denied wrong doing and offered assistance similar to the way we had assisted her sisters. In a more studied moment, I consulted the family, trusted friends and a local solicitor who wrote to Jim pointing out that this was blackmail and the authorities may not appreciate his criminal act. We never heard from Bev and Jim and didn't know they had separated or that Bev had returned to England with the children until she came to the notice of Social Services in her area for the neglect of her eldest daughter.

Until the arrival of the police we had heard nothing from Bev or May.

Once we had overcome the shock of arrest, charge and court appearances we began to bring order into what we had to do. Initially we used our knowledge to construct a timeline of events. Our solicitor, Malcolm, advised us he could manage the process and legal matters, but we were the experts of our family life.

We went back to Sarah's first marriage which proved painful in the extreme for her exposing the intimate, painful details of painful events. Hospital and GP records had long since disappeared, neighbours, solicitors and their records long gone. Key evidence and witnesses could not be located. Many of the Social Services' records had been lost or destroyed. Nonetheless, we discovered in our files and records some correspondence from SS. Through persistent searching we found professionals who recalled some details but bound by confidentiality were unable to tell us; however our legal team were able to call upon them if required.

May as an infant had contracted a bone disease which almost proved fatal; indeed, she had the last rites of the Catholic Church twice, maybe on three occasions. She still suffers from flare-ups of this problem and will continue do so for the rest of her life.

During questioning by the police, when I explained this condition the officers quoted from her statement which I found heart breaking. In four lines she dismissed the fact that her illness completely governed all of our lives. However, the positive point for us being that she had a well documented life with extensive hospital, GP,

support service and educational records and so we set about finding them and as many of the good professionals and support staff as possible. Quite a task as many had died by now, moved or emigrated. Still, we could show conclusively that I was not the controlling person portrayed in their allegations.

Surprisingly once the news spread of my arrest and charge, we received many offers of support, even though we could not mention their names most folk knew this. Bits and bobs of information that we could build on, whilst others could not recall the minutia of our family lives, what was recalled was helpful. As an example, it was claimed I would never allow the children to play with others or join groups. Thanks to Eve: she recalled taking part in school and church events, plays, dance groups and the St. John's Ambulance Brigade. One lovely lady actually still had the attendance register which delighted our lawyers.

We had two very important strokes of luck some months apart. First, I met a young man, Bill, who had been a neighbour for 15 years; even more important, his father had been our milkman over that period and Bill assisted his father when not at school. He was able to remember all of our neighbours, names, addresses who had died, who had moved and more.

On the suggestion of our lawyers we built an index of people that we believed could help us living, dead or missing. This eventually totalled some 103 with names, relationship and professionals and how these folks could assist with my defence.

The second real piece of luck came about as I was walking our dog one evening when a neighbour with whom I was on nodding terms, Brenda, stopped and asked, 'Is Beverley Brown your daughter?' When I replied positively, she remarked that she may be able to help. We had often wondered where Bev had got the story from. What Brenda revealed was extremely useful. Her sister Nora had been in and out of children's homes as she was beyond the control of her parents. It turned out Bev and Nora met each other whilst she was away from our home. Bev shared a room with Nora and two other teenage girls one of whom had been abused by her father who had been convicted. In the following years, the three, now women, had all gone on to make allegations of abuse by their father. Brenda and Nora's father had a very difficult time until finally Nora confessed that it was not true.

Following this we did uncover the address where Bev and Nora met. Simultaneously we searched

all our records for information which proved fruitful revealing some very useful information. Indeed, our barrister was delighted at several letters and notes we had uncovered from Social Services. I will not forget his exclamation: "We should not have these; however they are gold dust, undeniable evidence!"

We also located many hundreds of slides and photographs which were of great assistance in contradicting Bev's recollection of the decor and layout of our home.

Before May cut off contact, she had confided in Sarah she was undergoing counselling and indicated the psychotherapist's consulting rooms where she attended for treatment. When we later researched this person, we discovered his qualifications came from a correspondence school based in a back street in a Lancashire Mill town. Despite the impressive string of letters after his name, they were based on a correspondence course with a couple of weekend sessions at a random hotel.

The CPS and the case officer's approach was, dare I say, incompetent. We were continually waiting lengthy periods for the release of documents. In fact, on several occasions, the judge ordered the CPS to release documents, but to no avail. There came a point when we awaited the release of notes and records for 13 weeks. In court, the CPS barrister making an excuse flipping through her papers, suddenly sat down stared at the file she had been handed earlier, and then informed the judge that the release document was there in the file and had been for 13 weeks. The judge was scathing, unsurprisingly.

When Eve, Sarah and I sat down to examine the papers we found details which contradicted many of the allegations. We spent days going over the notes, cross referencing allegations, noting the points for the lawyers to follow up. We quickly discovered that following my first interview concerning May, the officers then went to Bev, gave her a notebook and pens and asked her to write down everything she wished to say during a video interview.

As we examined these notes, several issues came to light. Considering Bev was virtually illiterate and innumerate the composition was too perfect. We also pointed out there were three different writing styles that had compiled the notes, similar but definitely not one hand.

From the beginning tracing people, I turned to the collection of phone books held in our local library which proved very useful. Even if I didn't locate

the people straight away some good people passed on details of where relatives had moved to or pointed me to others who could assist.

One exceptional tracing event resulted in a worldwide collaboration in that a girl, Mary, now a lady, with whom May had been great friends at secondary school and who had accompanied us on a continental holiday had an unusual surname but had moved to another part of the country. Thanks to the phone books I found around 20 or so people in the area the family had returned to. I began calling. It was about the fourth or fifth call, when I spoke to a very charming elderly lady who didn't know the girl, but her son was a member of the family history group. I gave her my details. I was in touch with her son within hours. I explained my reasons for tracing Mary and accepted his offer of help. Within 24 hours I had her current address and details. These details came via family researchers in Australia, South Africa and finally Canada. We were on her doorstep two days later.

We later discovered when my accusers learned of this meeting, it sent them into a blind panic as they understood how determined we were to uncover the whole truth.

May had claimed in her statements to have required support from a group with the title of 'Survivors' and despite numerous requests through the court no details were provided. We set about locating this group using local knowledge. We discovered its whereabouts, organised by a major Local Authority and the Psychiatric Department of the local hospital under the guidance of the lead consultant who was a staunch supporter of recovered memory therapy. What we uncovered was frightening in that the sessions were open house, attendees were not expected to give their own names or reason for being present. No records were kept, the professional staff and support workers was changed on a monthly basis. What a witch's coven for intrigue. Once lawyers asked for confirmation, May belatedly reported she no longer attended this group and said that it had been disbanded.

My lawyers had picked up during one court appearance, that the CPS were not keen on continuing with the case, however the police officers, one in particular, were not willing to give up. My lawyers attempted to put an Abuse of Process argument forward on the basis that these allegations went back between 25 and 40 years ago. The judge refused but made an observation that completely went over my head. She could not allow the abuse of process argument, however she commented to the barrister, "you may well, hav-

ing heard the prosecution case, be in a position to put forward no case to answer.”

This was in June. I’m informed that by September the CPS were minded to drop the case, however the lead officer insisted saying ‘we might get lucky in court!’ It was to be the following March before the CPS finally insisted on dropping the case 6 weeks before trial.

The dirty tricks continued in that I was to go before the judge for dismissal. Unbelievably, 48 hours beforehand, the case was transferred to another court in a different town and with a new judge. Why? The CPS barrister was in a trial in the same court and could easily deal with it.

I will never forget the reasons given for asking for dismissal: the usual not sufficient evidence followed by ‘the story these women now tell bears little or no truth to the facts of their lives!’ What an admission!

The final insult being the barrister asked to be excused as she had to return to the court we should have been present in! The legal team were not surprised as they expected the judge to be scathing of the police and CPS in their handling and presentation of my case.

In summary, we chose an experienced professional lawyer and his team, put to use the vast knowledge we and the family had about our real family history to show that the allegations were not only untrue, but also unfounded and not supported by the evidence. We accepted guidance from those more experienced and were dogged in our endeavours to seek out the truth. We survived, but only just.

Creating Hysteria: Carl Beech and a modern-day witch hunt

Dr Kevin Felstead

The recent conviction of Carl Beech in Newcastle Crown Court has resulted in a media frenzy. This sorry saga has exposed the shambolic state of affairs surrounding the investigations of historic allegations of sexual abuse in the United Kingdom. Beech was convicted of 12 counts of perverting the course of justice and of one count of fraud, after claiming £22,000 from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority. Excluding the cost of Beech’s 10-week trial in Newcastle Crown Court, Operations Midland and Conifer have cost the taxpayer in excess of £4 million. Beech, aka ‘Nick’ accused a number of prominent

figures including: former Home Secretary Leon Brittan (who died with allegations hanging over him); Lord Bramall (a former head of the army); Lord Janner (a former Labour MP); Harvey Proctor (a former Conservative MP); and former Prime Minister, Sir Edward Heath (deceased, 2005). Beech also accused, Sir Morris Oldfield, a former head of M16; Sir Michael Hanley, previously Director of M15 and Field Marshall Sir Roland Gibbs.

Beech accused the men of being part of an organised paedophile network responsible for rape, torture and murder. “I was physically, emotionally and sexually abused by my step-father and a paedophile ring of 20 men,” alleged Beech. Beech had previously pleaded guilty to possessing indecent images ‘of the gravest kind’. During the trial it emerged that he had previously delivered child abuse training to primary school children on behalf of the NSPCC. Carl Beech began his career working as paediatric nurse; he was subsequently employed as a manager for the Healthcare Quality Commission.

In his opening speech, Tony Baddenoch QC for the prosecution, said: “This case concerns the making of false allegations of the most serious kind.” The false allegations include three child murders, multiple rapes, kidnapping and widespread sexual abuse against young boys. It is quite impossible to conceive of allegations of a worse kind to be made.” Beech claimed that “he was abused by his stepfather” while young. He claimed that he had suffered physical and sexual abuse, including rape. Beech accused former heads of M15 and M16 whom he claimed, “were responsible for abuse and forms of torture” in the form of “electric shocks and having darts thrown at him”. Beech alleged further that he had been “taken to parties” where he was abused in a variety of locations. These included: Dolphin Square, military barracks, the Elm Guest House, the Carlton Club, Heathrow Airport, London Zoo, Brighton, Edward Heath’s house and on the yacht of the former Prime Minister. In 2014, police said in a press conference that the allegations were “credible and true”. Baddenoch, addressing the court, said that the allegations were “a complete fabrication”. They are “incredible and untrue”.

Beech claimed to have witnessed the murder of Martin Allen who disappeared in London in 1979, aged 15. Kevin Allen, the brother of Martin, was contacted in 2014 by the Metropolitan Police Service. He was informed that police had received information alleging that his brother had been abducted by a paedophile murder ring. “The source of that false hope to Kevin,” the prosecu-

tion stated, “35 years after his brother went missing, was ultimately the false allegations of this defendant, Carl Beech.”

His anonymity was removed after a judge ruled that it was in the interests of justice for him to be named. The Met Police closed down the investigation in 2016 and no arrests were made. The case was referred to Northumbria Police to investigate the allegations of the complainant. They “found that key elements” of the story were totally unfounded and the fantastical allegations began to unfold. Beech’s home was raided and electronic devices were seized. Beech’s lurid fantasies were remarkable. He claimed, “a boy had been murdered by Harvey (Proctor), raped and stabbed.” He told police that he held his (the boy’s) hand and was told “that he was next. Another boy was murdered ... after the abusers asked the boys to elect who should be murdered.” Beech, aged 46, claimed that the abuse started when he was aged seven, and stopped before he was 16. He was subsequently allocated a police liaison officer “to assist him and to support him in the process”. In interview with Northumbria Police, Beech declined to comment and, according to the Prosecutor he “fled the country and lived overseas as a fugitive”. A special fugitive agency in Sweden secured his arrest, working with the National Crime Agency utilising a European Arrest Warrant.”

Beech told the Metropolitan Police that he had witnessed the murder of a young boy named Scott who was “run over and killed in front of him”. He claimed that Scott was a school friend who was murdered for befriending Beech. “It was a ‘secret’ that he carried throughout his life for fear of speaking it. The Met Police ascertained that Carol Beech was never at school with a boy named Scott. There was no missing boy. It was a complete fabrication.” Observing the evidence unfold in court was surreal. I pondered whether Beech had a double first in method acting. In the video recordings of police interviews, his answers – and demeanour – appeared to be well-rehearsed and designed for impact.

Beech had 121 counselling sessions with Vicki Paterson. (there is unavoidable duplication here with the submission to the Miscarriage of Justice Commission pp. 4-8 because part of the content is based on this article). Beech sent her an e-mail with a “body map” outlining his alleged injuries at the hands of his abusers. He colour-coded the body map to represent the injuries he said he had sustained. These included: broken bones and wasp stings. He claimed that his abusers had inserted into him “various objects”. Paterson

testified that she was profoundly shocked at the coloured drawings but appears to have made no attempt to authenticate the veracity of Carl Beech’s allegations.

Her website is illuminating:

“I will listen in a non-judgmental way understanding your world from your point of view... The starting point is to build a collaborative and trusting relationship between us which should then allow you to acknowledge and talk about your feelings, however difficult or uncomfortable they are. Working in a supportive way, emotions from the past and present will be allowed to surface and aspects of yourself **which may have become hidden move into your consciousness... I believe that you are the only expert in your internal world and the only person who really knows how you feel.**”

This ‘belief’ is clearly problematic. No evidence came to light that Paterson implanted false memories however, by accepting the veracity of Beech’s claims uncritically, Paterson was effectively fostering his delusions. The same can be said of the Metropolitan Police Service. In counselling sessions with Paterson, Beech claimed that he was assaulted by a Saudi Prince and, as his delusions cemented by a “foreign royal family”. Beech also made allegations in therapy sessions about Edward Heath, Harvey Proctor and Leon Brittan. When questioned by police why he delayed reporting, Beech responded: “I did not report sooner (the alleged abuse) because the group who abused me were very powerful men ... I have been in fear of my safety since the abuse started.”

The response of the psychotherapists

On 26 July, the Guardian newspaper published a letter by the self-proclaimed leader of the recovered memory movement – Valerie Sinason – and 37 of her supporters. Many of these are known to the BFMS. They proclaimed, “Trauma and abuse evoke powerful feelings. As therapists, psychologists and counsellors we are concerned that the extra anger aimed at Tom Watson MP, the police and Carl Beech is missing reflection.”

Sinason and her coterie defended Watson who rose to his feet in October 2012 during prime minister’s questions in front of a bemused David Cameron and issued a clarion call about a “powerful paedophile network linked to parliament and No 10”. Tellingly, the letter did not mention Beech’s many victims, nor did it make any reference to his guilty plea to possessing

indecent (including Class A) images on his phone, encrypted and hidden behind a calculator.

Watson is now under mounting pressure to resign. He met in person with Carl Beech in his Westminster Office before Beech made allegations to the Metropolitan Police Service in 2014. His Westminster statement helped fuel a national moral panic about child abuse. Watson later wrote to the Prime Minister insisting that a paedophile network had been operative in parliament during Margaret Thatcher's premiership. He was involved with the now disgraced news agency, Exaro, who helped to disseminate the myth that a Westminster sex ring had operated at the heart of the Establishment. He was also in contact with police and the crown prosecution service who he insisted ought to investigate Beech's untrue allegations. The Met Police – who had previously come under fire for not taking the allegations against Jimmy Savile seriously – then set up the now discredited Operation Midland.

Daniel Janner QC the son of the late Lord Grenville Janner (who was falsely accused by Beech) writing in the Times newspaper (24 January 2019) has called for Watson to apologise and resign after he used parliamentary privilege to proclaim that there “was clear intelligence” about a Westminster establishment paedophile ring in support of Beech's unsubstantiated claims. Speaking about the devastating impact of these false allegations on his own family Janner, wrote: “For six years my family has endured a living nightmare. That's how long it has been since the fantasist Carl Beech concocted his hateful series of lies about my late father ... a gentle, kind and loving man who was never convicted of any offence and whose lengthy record of public service has been besmirched in the most evil way.”

Let us pause here and remind ourselves about the lurid allegations. Beech claimed:

- That he had been abused by Sir Edward Heath on his personal yacht – the Morning Cloud
- That Leon Brittan had raped him over a bath
- That an establishment paedophile ring was responsible for three child murders
- That he had witnessed Harvey Proctor murder one of the boys
- That Edward Heath had stopped Harvey Proctor castrating him with a penknife
- That his dog had been kidnapped by Michael Hanley who also set wasps on him before locking him in a cupboard with a snake
- That he had been repeatedly abused at military bases
- That his abuse included being used as a human darts-board

The ‘body map’ drawn up by Beech was supposed to outline the many injuries he had endured as a result of the abuse. The court heard that evidence from a forensic pathologist who testified that the injuries did not exist and that there was no physical evidence whatsoever to suggest that Beech had been injured in the way he described. At his trial, the court that Beech had described Watson as a member of a “little group supporting me... I went to meet Tom Watson in his office and talked to him at some length ...”

Grenville Janner was not the only ex politician to be besmirched by Watson: in a letter to the Sunday Mirror in 2015, Lord Brittan's name was dragged through the mud. Watson wrote about Beech: “One survivor said to me that Brittan ‘showed me no kindness or warmth’ and he ‘was as close to evil as a human being could get in my view’. This was a source of considerable distress to Brittan's family who were still reeling from the shock of his premature death from cancer four days previously. He died without knowing that his name would eventually be cleared when Northumbria police would conclude that the allegations against him were groundless. Writing about Watson, Lord McDonald QC, a former director of public prosecutions, stated tellingly in a letter to the Times newspaper (24 July 2019) that “politicians should never use criminal justice, still less particular investigations, as a way of inserting themselves into a news cycle.”

The controversy surrounding Tom Watson is unlikely to dissipate following a recent revelation that the Met police conducted a further operation into the allegations against Leon Brittan code-named Operation Vincente. It has now emerged that Former High Court judge, Sir Richard Henriques, who wrote a damning report about Operation Midland, additionally wrote a report about Operation Vincente. The former has been the subject of fierce criticism because it has been heavily redacted. According to the Telegraph newspaper (21 September 2019), Scotland Yard suppressed publication of a second report which was highly critical of the police and the role of Tom Watson in the investigations against Lord Brittan. ‘The review of the police inquiry, called Operation Vincente, raises serious questions over police handling of the historic rape allegation, made by a woman who can be identified only as Jane.’

As the BFMS submission to the Miscarriages of Justice Commission makes clear, the allegations against former Prime Minister Sir Edward Heath are based entirely on therapeutically driven false-memory-type allegations. This is an appalling waste of the public purse. Criminologist Dr Rachael Hoskins who was instructed by Wiltshire

Police to examine the ‘evidence’ was appalled at the ludicrous nature of the unfounded claims of murder, child sacrifice and Satanic Ritual Abuse. The exotic allegations surrounding the myth of SRA in the UK continues to drag on and on and on. It is based on belief – not evidence. Dr Hoskins’ report emphatically demonstrates that the fantasy-prone allegations involve controversial psychotherapists practising recovered memory therapy. Tellingly Hoskins states that Carl Beech and the other accusers in the case of Edward Heath, including ‘Lucy X’ were responsible for the implementation of the ongoing Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA). The cost of the inquiry to date is now approaching 100 million pounds. It is also worthy of note that in the 10-year period from 2008 to 2018, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) has paid out a staggering – wait for it! – **£443,094,735**. Add to this the £4.5 million pounds of taxpayer’s money wasted on Operations Midland and Conifer, plus the estimated cost of the Carl Beech trial (£1.5 million) and we get an insight into the cost of sexual abuse allegations. In 2008 – 09 (according to a Freedom of Information Request filed to the CICA), £40,239,919 was paid in compensation, £54,801,643 in 2016-17 rising to £71,376,780 in 2017-2018. In Germany, where compensation is no longer paid as a matter of course, sexually allegations have declined significantly.

LEGAL FORUM

A Call to End the Uncertainty caused by Long Police Investigations

Solicitor Claire Anderson, ABV Solicitors, who is known to the BFMS, recently wrote an excellent piece in the Times newspaper (June 11, 2019) about the chaotic aftermath following voluntary police interviews:

Leaving suspects in the dark for years can destroy lives – our justice system must unite for change. Waiting for results is stressful, whether it be for medical tests or exams, indeed anything that will have an impact on one’s life and future.

Imagine a serious sexual allegation is made against you – perhaps by a former partner or family member. You are interviewed by police and strenuously deny the allegation. You are told that there will be an investigation. You will be

notified “in due course” of the outcome. Weeks, then months roll by. Sometimes years. You remain in limbo. The strain is unbearable, affecting not only you but all those close to you. It is a living hell.

This scenario, as Anderson pinpoints, is far from uncommon. It happens week in week out. It is, in fact, a more or less universal phenomenon that solicitors see happening all across England and Wales.

During the past three months, 6,500 cases in England and Wales have entered into this legal abyss. No bail conditions, no supervision, no timescales. Both suspects and lawyers are often kept in the dark about the progress of a case – immaterial of the nature of the alleged crime – whether to do with sexual allegations, drugs, fraud, or serious assault. More than half of lawyers surveyed by the London Criminal Courts Solicitors’ Association reported to be involved in cases under police investigation that have been ongoing for between 19 months and two years. The impact is catastrophic:

Two years of a suspect with their life on hold, two years of complainants or victim with no closure or protection, two years of society unprotected by safeguards.

The mess we are in lies in part in a well-intentioned law change. After a campaign started by broadcaster Paul Gambaccini and others, the Policing and Crime Act 2017 limited to 28 days the length of time a suspect could remain on pre-charge bail conditions – extendable in exceptional circumstances. At the time, defence lawyers thought that was a great advance. But was it?

The legislation has clearly backfired. Due, in part at least, to a lack of police resources. On police officer told me recently that she is currently managing 23 cases – necessitating 23 investigations. Many of those accused have remained ‘under investigation’ indefinitely, which explains why some remained trapped in limbo for two years or more. Historians discern between intent and outcome. They are not necessarily the same. Put simply, the new law achieves the opposite of what was originally intended. The falsely accused, in particular, are caught between a rock and a hard place.

It is now time to review the police investigation process. The entire justice system, including the judiciary, police and the crown prosecution service need to unite to remedy the current situation and bring about change that can deliver justice to those accused of crimes in a legal and timely manner.

Overseas False Memory Societies

Please feel free to write or phone if you have relatives in these countries who would like to receive local information. The American and Australian groups produce newsletters.

AUSTRALIA

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