

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." (Edmund Burke)

DR QUENTIN WYNN SPENDER was issued with a reprimand for Serious Professional Misconduct by the General Medical Council on 12th October 2005. In a number of cases where Dr Spender had formed the opinion that someone had been the victim of sexual abuse, the panel found that he had made assertions of fact based on uncorroborated allegations, had insufficient information on which to draw that conclusion, and did not adequately explore other sources of information or make appropriate enquiries before drawing the conclusion that he did and making what the Panel found to be a strong statement. Dr Spender had called Dr Arnon Bentovim as an expert in his support, and the Panel's view was that they had NOT been assisted by Dr Bentovim's evidence on this point. They ruled that Dr Spender was irresponsible in not considering the potential repercussions of his actions.

CHANGES IN THE PAROLE SYSTEM. Under the new rules, people serving a standard determinate sentence of 12 months or more, for an offence committed on or after 4th April 2005, will be automatically released on licence at the half-way point of the sentence and the licence will run to the sentence expiry date. DO NOTE that this is based on the date of the alleged offence and has NOTHING to do with date of trial or sentencing.

THE ROLE OF EXPERT WITNESSES IN TRIALS is to be independently reviewed in an effort to reduce wrongful convictions. Lawyer Bill O'Brien, of the University of Warwick, is to study some of the 7,300 cases referred to the Criminal Cases Review Commission and examine whether experts are putting forward views that are implausible or too partisan. This is the first time the commission, which examines potential miscarriages of justice, is opening up its files to somebody outside the organisation. Mr O'Brien will also consider whether courts should be more robust about the expert evidence they allow to be heard.

16 YEARS FOR CHILD'S LIES. Mark Cleary (USA) has been released after serving 16 years in prison for a crime which his accuser now admits never happened. His daughter Rachael, aged nearly 10 at the time of the trial, had told social workers that her father had repeatedly raped her and threatened to kill her mother if Rachael ever told anyone. There was no physical evidence of sexual abuse - just graphic details provided to social workers with the vocabulary of a child. Social workers said the nightmares, anxiety and other emotional problems she had experienced were consistent with sexual abuse, and said they considered, but discounted, that she had made up the charges because of parental strife. The prosecutor told jurors: "These are details that one would not expect of a young child unless she actually had been there and experienced this type of behaviour. ... We have no reason to believe that Rachael is telling anything other than the truth." The story arose against the background of access battles between parents. Many years later, Rachael, sobbing uncontrollably, retracted her allegations and said that she had sent her innocent father to prison. Rachael said her mother, at the time of the original allegations, had been asking her "Did he do this?" or "Did he do that?" and said she simply said yes and, having lied, couldn't back out of it.

Forensic psychologist Gordon Blush says research going back as far as the 1970's and 80's has found that children COULD be manipulated, sometimes inadvertently, into falsely accusing feuding parents of sexual abuse. "Once the allegation is made, forces are set in motion that take on a life of their own," Blush said, adding that parents are still being convicted for crimes they didn't commit.

SCOTTISH PAROLE BOARD FIGURES: at present the Scottish Parole Board do not supply figures similar to those we publish on behalf of the Parole Board for England and Wales. We are working on this!

IEP AND COURSES – LEARN FASTER!

We had a massive response to our article about IEP status being affected as a result of maintaining innocence. Although there were cases where it appears that a sentence plan has included an unachievable 'goal' (such as doing the standard SOTP course if you are maintaining innocence), in many cases the 'goal' which the inmate refused to do WAS ACHIEVABLE and did NOT require them to 'admit guilt.' If you REFUSE to attend or be assessed for a course then it IS ALMOST GUARANTEED that you will be refused Enhanced Status. We positively RECOMMEND the ETS course – attending this will do you nothing but good, and it does not require you to 'admit guilt'. The fact that it is 'run' by the Offending Behaviour Team as opposed to the Education Team is TOTALLY IRRELEVANT. NEVER "refuse" a course. Agree to do any assessment that is asked of you, with the single proviso that "I will not tell lies in order to do this course." If you flatly refuse to do something on your sentence plan which IS achievable (such as the ETS) then it is not unjustified for you to lose your Enhanced status!

Thanks to Terry McCarthy at the Parole Board for supplying us with the latest figures for those who achieved release on Parole whilst maintaining innocence.

September 2005			
<i>Non-lifers:</i>			
All offences	16	of 53	30.2%
Rape	5	of 18	27.8%
Indecent Assault	2	of 10	20.0%
Other Sex	0	of 5	0.0%
Violence	0	of 3	0.0%
Property	4	of 6	66.7%
Drugs	4	of 7	57.1%
Others	1	of 4	25.0%
Total Sex	7	of 33	21.2%
Total Non Sex	9	of 20	45.0%
<i>Lifers only</i>	0	of 1	0.0%
<small>(0 of the 1 lifers recommended for open conditions)</small>			

Donations very much appreciated at:



Or hit the button on the website!

a/c name: 'SAFARI', Sort Code: 30-92-02, a/c No.: 2702360

Contact us by eMail at SAFARI_Editor@yahoo.co.uk

(We can accept no responsibility for errors in this newsletter as we only share information received)