

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

SCHOOL TEACHER CHRISTOPHER BARKER has been cleared of sexual assault charges against a ten-year-old boy pupil. Only a short while before Mr Barker's acquittal, prosecutor John Philpotts claimed the boy "lacked the maturity and sophistication to lie about the allegations in such detail." Andrew Jebb, defending, told the jury that the evidence showed that the boy *had* lied. The CPS know full well that children – even quite young children – DO sometimes have the ability, and the knowledge, to make quite detailed false allegations. The Government's own research (Department of Health publication: "[Child Protection and Child Abuse: Messages from Research](#)", ISBN 0113217811) clearly states in the chapter entitled "What Is Normal" that 9% of children between the ages of 4 and 16, *who have been screened for the absence of abuse*, have seen sexually explicit material. That's about one in eleven children *from age four upwards*. (The same publication also states that though this may be undesirable, it would be "presumptuous to call it abusive.") Knowing that one in eleven children from school-starting age onwards have had access to sexually explicit and detailed material, it is wholly unethical for Prosecutors to make any kind of claim or statement to the jury that would mislead them on such an important issue. Juries (the vast majority of whom will *not* have read the Government's own research) tend to believe 'authority figures', and the Prosecutor is certainly an 'authority figure' to them. We also have to condemn the fact that Prosecutor John Philpotts had voiced his own (presumably not medically or psychiatrically qualified) opinions (which are in direct contradiction to Government research) in this way – particularly as we have been reliably (but rather naïvely) informed, courtesy of the Better Trials Unit at the Home Office, that Prosecutors *don't* voice their own opinions in Court as they are NOT ALLOWED to do so. John Philpotts was not a witness, he was *certainly* not an *expert* witness, and he had taken no oath.

BRAVE CHILD ADMITS LIES: Father Elias Polomski has been cleared of sexually assaulting a young girl at his vicarage between May 2004 and March 2006. Miss Fiona Horlick (prosecuting) told Judge Stephen Kramer at Reading Crown Court that she had no evidence to submit against the vicar because the child, now aged 9, had withdrawn her claims. The court heard that when the girl was questioned again by police, she told officers she made up parts of her original police interview and that it was not true. It has been pointed out that the girl, who cannot be named for legal reasons, is too young to face prosecution over her false claims.

SAFARI has three points to make in connection with this case. Firstly, that there should never have been any question as to whether this child should have been prosecuted. Many people - including 'experts' - seem to be totally unaware of the enormous effect that even the most subtle pressure can have upon a young child, both to make false claims, or (having made them) to continue to uphold them. These pressures can be brought to bear by parents, Social Workers, Police officers, 'experts', and others. One only has to consider the 'child's viewpoint' of abuse investigations which have recently come to light following the disastrous Orkney, Rochdale, Western Isles and other cases to appreciate the enormous pressures put on children and young people by adults intent on a witch-hunt. It would be wholly wrong to consider prosecuting young or vulnerable people for making or sustaining allegations under pressure from others.

Secondly, yet again it has been shown that even quite young children ARE capable of making false allegations convincing enough for the CPS to go ahead with a prosecution; without the retraction, it would have been highly likely that Father Polomski would have been convicted – and, without the retraction, the CPS would in all probability have used all their usual tactics to *ensure* that he was.

Finally, we take our hats off to this courageous child for having the guts to withdraw those claims, and to admit that she had made things up. It must have taken great strength of mind to back down, and this can only be congratulated in the most heartfelt way. Much older children - and adults, too - often find that it is easier to 'go with the flow', with the 'encouragement' of a multitude of authority figures, than to defy those figures and admit that the claims were false. This young child should feel proud of her courage.

KATIE DAVIS HAS BEEN FOUND GUILTY of perverting the course of justice after inventing a story (at the age of 16) of having been raped by a stranger in an alleyway because of fears she could be pregnant after having unprotected sex with Frank Chisholm. Her allegation condemned him to 10 weeks in prison after he was charged with rape. The charge was later dropped when forensic tests proved Davis was lying. Judge Brown said Mr Chisholm, who always maintained the pair had consensual sex, had no stain against his character, and described Katie Davis as "wicked and evil". After the verdict, the court heard how Mr Chisholm had gone from being an outgoing and sociable young man to feeling nervous and paranoid and unable to trust anyone. In a statement, Mr Chisholm said that when he went into his local fish and chip shop after his release, people would call him a rapist and goad him by asking for 'rape and chips'. He said: "One call from that girl has changed my whole life forever. This seems like a nightmare that will never end." Frank's father, Steve, said: "My son has now been proved innocent not once, but twice. The first time he was still ridiculed by people with a 'mud sticks' attitude. He is now 100 per cent proved innocent. My son has been left absolutely devastated; he will never be the same man. He is a totally different person. He is quite subdued and doesn't want to go out. He stays in and is very careful about women."

Donations very much appreciated at:

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



Or hit the
button on the
website!

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)

ANGELA STRETTON, whose 'evidence' was vital in bringing a case of satanic sex abuse against eight people on the island of Lewis, has written to police confessing that some of the allegations she made were false. A senior police officer expressed concerns about Stretton's reliability at the time, but was ignored. Angela, now 39, who has learning difficulties, said that after repeated questioning she told police and social workers she witnessed her mother, brother and several other islanders abusing children. She says: "I had lots of meetings with police and social workers. They kept questioning me about different people. It was a different person every day. They had a list of names, including my mum and brother. They said things about taking photos and killing animals and drinking their blood. At first I said no, they wouldn't do that. But they kept on and on at me. They said I had to tell the truth for the children. I felt really under pressure, so I suppose I told them what they wanted to hear. I just agreed with what was being said. Plus at that time I wanted to get my own back on my mum. I know this is wrong. I just want to try and put things right. I want to say sorry to them and clear their names."

A spokesman for Western Isles Council said it was confident that the correct procedures were followed in the original investigation. However, SAFARI would like to draw attention to the fact that, yet again, a vulnerable person, with learning difficulties, was put under unremitting pressure to make allegations, to embellish upon them, and to maintain them. The pressures seemed, to Angela, to be impossible to withstand - so she caved in and told them what they so obviously wanted to hear. Although it's tragic for all those concerned that Angela did not feel able to say earlier that this was what had happened, we have to congratulate her on her courage in saying this now. That courage is all the more to be applauded as Angela knew that this story would appear in the media.

EFFECTIVE DETERRENDS ...?: In a House of Commons written answer dated 4th September 2006, Gerry Sutcliffe said: "Perverting the course of justice and attempting to pervert the course of justice (*by making false allegations*) are common law offences for which there is no statutory maximum. The full range of penalties is therefore available. Custodial sentences of up to eight years have been imposed in recent cases. *Sentences average around eight months.*"

ANVER SHEIKH, twice convicted of buggery and indecent assaults allegedly committed in 1980, has been cleared by the Court of Appeal for a second time. The Appeal Court recognised that Mr Sheikh's second conviction for sex crimes was "unsafe". Fresh evidence again showed that one of the complainants against him could not have been telling the truth. He had alleged that he had been so distressed by the abuse that he had attempted suicide five times. But medical records showed that he had never even been to his GP complaining of depression, let alone been treated for an attempt at suicide. The prosecution, however, had *not passed on those records to the defence*, so the trial had proceeded without the jury being made aware of this. The Historical Abuse Appeals Panel (HAAP) said false allegations were "compounded by the complicity of the police in failing to carry out a fair and independent investigation". Claire Curtis-Thomas MP, Chair of the All-party Parliamentary Group for Abuse Investigations, has said: "We have asked for changes in the way that the police conduct these inquiries, but I am afraid they continue to abuse the processes for their own purposes." However, as so often happens, it was clearly not just the Police who were at fault. The CPS had in their possession evidence which wholly undermined the credibility of a witness - yet failed to disclose it. The 'result' (a conviction) was apparently more important to them than either justice or the truth.

LORD CAMPBELL-SAVOURS has used Parliamentary privilege to name the woman who falsely accused Warren Blackwell, who was cleared by the Appeal Court after serving more than three years in jail. Lord Campbell-Savours said: "Is not the inevitable consequence of the workings of the law, as currently framed, that we will carry on imprisoning innocent people like Warren Blackwell, who was falsely accused by a serial and repeated liar, *<name was given here>*, with a history of false accusations and multiple identities? As a result of her accusations, Mr Blackwell spent three-and-a-half years in prison, following a shoddy and inadequate police investigation, and was only exonerated when the Criminal Cases Review Commission inquiry cleared him and traced her history." Those wishing to find the name can do so in the official [Hansard \(House of Lords\) entry](#) at column 868, for Thursday 19th October 2006, at 11:21 am, or simply by clicking the link to the Hansard entry from the SAFARI website.

STEPHEN DOWNING, who was falsely accused of murder and spent 27 years in prison, has received a final compensation payment from the Home Office. Stephen had a tariff of 17 years - but was continuously denied parole for a further ten years as he 'refused to address his offending behaviour' and therefore could not demonstrate any 'reduced risk'. His conviction was quashed by the Court of Appeal in January 2002, after concerns were raised about the way the police investigation was carried out. The charge had relied on a confession, which came after officers interviewed Downing, then with a reading age of 11, for more than eight hours. The admission was later retracted but it remained a plank of the prosecution. Yet again we have a case where a vulnerable person was coerced into making a statement by unremitting pressure from the authorities. It's naïve to suggest that this sort of thing doesn't happen any more - *we know it does*.

URGENT CHANGE REQUIRED: In many countries a "perverse jury decision" is good grounds for appeal, and plain common sense would state that this simple rule SHOULD apply in the UK as well. Juries under the influence of a clever Prosecutor can act very strangely. In one case, a complainant admitted in court that her 'memory' of rape could have been a dream, and forensics reports showed she was a *virgin* - and yet the jury decided 'beyond reasonable doubt' that the man was guilty of rape. This decision was clearly perverse - it had *nothing* to do with the evidence, and probably *everything* to do with a hypnotically persuasive storyteller standing at the Prosecutor's table. Two failed appeals followed on from this shocking scenario. However much we in Britain might 'love' our jury system, the fact remains that juries are human, fallible, and too readily swayed by emotions, hype, and the Prosecutor's 'opinions' - no matter HOW they are directed by the Judge. Crass stupidity by the jury needs to be recognised as grounds for appeal!

JOIN THE PROTEST, 21ST NOV '06! Don Western invites you to attend another protest, in support of the falsely accused, to be held outside the Royal Courts of Justice at The Strand, London, on Tuesday 21st November 2006 between 12 noon and 3pm. The police have approved the event. If you, or others with whom you are in touch, are interested in joining in please eMail Don on donbampi@btinternet.com, or ring him on (01892) 530 014.

TIM AND GINA WILLIAMS have been reunited with their three children since Judge Crispin Masterman exonerated them after they were wrongfully accused of sexual assault. They are now considering legal action for compensation against Newport Council for the two years their children spent in care, with their parents being allowed only two visits each week, lasting one and a half hours, at a neutral venue.

The children were removed from the family's home after Mr Williams went upstairs to see an 11-year-old visiting boy lying on top of his son, then aged five. Mr Williams alerted police but a medical examination carried out as part of the subsequent investigation resulted in Social Services claiming the child had been abused by an adult.

The case against the parents collapsed after the family consulted an American doctor who found there was no suggestion of any sexual abuse. The family division of the High Court in Cardiff was told that Newport Council had "apologised" for removing the children but said it had "acted in good faith." The collapse of the case is the latest in what has become a long series of instances in which parents accused of child abuse of various kinds have been shown to be innocent.

This case is a rare (and to be applauded) example of a Family Court case in which a Judge has made his ruling public. Judge Crispin Masterman criticised Social Services for failing to follow recommended procedures and not carrying out a proper assessment of the family, and also criticised the way in which medical examinations in sex abuse cases are carried out in Britain. He said: "I praise the family for their tenacity without which a more serious miscarriage of justice might have taken place. The children returned home as soon as misdiagnosis was confirmed and I was told that it was as if they had never been away. But it would be idle to suppose that two years' separation can be repaired in a weekend."

The lessons that might have been learnt after the mass satanic abuse scandals of Cleveland, Rochdale and Orkney in the late 1980s and early 1990s have led to a series of individual cases in which parents have eventually established their innocence by finding medical specialists to challenge the opinions of experts speaking outside their area of competence.

Newport Council said that they would be commissioning a full-scale external review of all their procedures.

SALLY HENDERSON HAS BEEN CONVICTED of perverting the course of justice after falsely crying rape against her former husband. Her claims were almost identical to false allegations she had made five years earlier against a previous boyfriend. Henderson falsely cried rape in both cases only after the men left her.

Lynne Matthews, prosecuting, said: "Sally Henderson is a wicked liar. There is nothing more wicked that a woman can do against her husband or partner than to claim rape. But there is very little for a man to do other than say he didn't do it. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned and her claims were a tissue of lies." During the trial, Recorder David Lane, QC imposed a ban on identifying Henderson under Section 1(1) of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992, which guarantees lifetime anonymity to any woman who makes a complaint of a sexual offence, but he lifted the restriction after the jury convicted Henderson.

He said "The public has a right to know the identity of a person who makes such allegations and who seeks to use the system of justice for her own, unscrupulous ends. These two men were put through the extreme anxiety of facing the most serious and most grave offences that can be brought against a man." Section 1(4) of the Act gave him discretion to remove the order giving her anonymity, as the Act allowed the lifting of such an order where the offence – perverting the course of justice – was not sexual.

Neither man was charged but Henderson's plea of not guilty meant that they had to give evidence to the jury.

The Judge told Henderson she had "forced the two men to appear in a public court, face complete strangers and give evidence and be cross-examined about painful, embarrassing and intimate details". One of the accused told the Court: "It was quite shocking to have three or four police officers arrest you, manhandle you and take you away for something you've never done."

Incredibly, acting DI Mark Little said afterwards: "Thankfully cases such as this are rare." In fact, it is now thought that many hundreds of people have been falsely accused - many of whom go on to be convicted, and many of whom have no 'grounds for appeal'. This can certainly leave the naïve with the *impression* that false claims are rare.

MAY WILLSHER, (now aged 24), one of the children caught up in the disastrously mis-managed Orkney abuse investigation, is set to sue Orkney Islands Council for £100,000, claiming her childhood was ruined when she was taken from her home in 1990.

Sam and Johnny McEwan, also removed wrongfully from their homes in the case, have also recently spoken out. Sam said: "It was so full-on. The Social Workers wouldn't listen when I told them there was no truth in what they were saying about sex abuse. They kept telling me to think about it a little longer. In retrospect, I'm surprised one of the children didn't lie and tell them something was going on, just to get a bit of relief from the relentlessness of it all. These people were supposed to be responsible for the welfare of children but they didn't seem to think about the damage they were causing. Looking back, the only abuse we suffered was by Social Workers, who took us away and stopped us having any contact with our families." In October 1992 a £6 million, seven-month judicial enquiry resulted in a stinging rebuke for Social Workers who, (sadly NOT unbelievably) are STILL in denial about the case. Social Worker Janette Chisholm, who was involved in the questioning, maintains a child's denial is not proof. "If it is a secret they'll deny. As long as it's a secret, denial will come for the same reason the secrecy is there - keeping something safe," she said. We suspect that Social Workers' denial stems from the same source - they're 'keeping something safe'. Their careers, possibly. Orkney Islands Council said it could not comment on individual cases.

May says she was the victim of a "witch hunt" by Social Workers. She is being represented by lawyer Cameron Fyfe, who is awaiting an expert social worker report before progressing with legal action. Mr Fyfe says: "Compensation would have to reflect the damage to her psychological health and loss of her childhood." Sam McEwan comments: "We'd like to have seen heads roll and charges brought against those responsible."

SAFARI would like to see far more young people, whose lives have been ruined by over-zealous Social Workers, making claims for compensation for the devastating damage they've suffered. It seems that hitting Social Services in the conscience doesn't work. (One wonders why.) Perhaps hitting them in the wallet will have an impact.

HOME OFFICE COMMUNICATIONS: Many SAFARI readers have received replies from the Home Office stating that they have "no intention to *immediately* implement a version of Megan's Law in the UK" – this would suggest that they intend implementing some version of it later. We suggest readers continue to lobby them by writing to Mr Daniel Wearen of the (badly named) *Violent Crime Unit*, Home Office, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF to ask what the benefits are of releasing ANY information about sex offenders to Public.

For those truly guilty of sexual offences, 'Megan's Law' will have little impact - except for perhaps increasing offences against children as those most at risk of re-offending will simply choose to 'go underground' and stop registering on the Sex Offenders Register, as they will fear the consequences of 'Megan's Law'. They will then feel more free to commit crime as they are no longer being monitored. (In the UK, 97% of alleged sex offenders sign the register and yet in the USA – since the introduction of Megan's Law – only 80% register.) An ever-increasing number of people are being falsely accused of sexual offences and wrongfully convicted. These are law-abiding people who would continue to sign the register (and be constantly in fear of being made 'known' to the public as a result of 'Megan's Law') *because* they are law abiding. And yet these are the very people who are least at risk of committing an offence. In addition, it must be remembered that only a tiny percentage of abuse against children is actually committed by strangers.

In the responses from the Home Office that SAFARI readers have passed to us, the Home Office say that reports from the USA regarding vigilante action are 'largely anecdotal'.

However, events which have already happened in the UK, when sex offender information (or mis-information) has been leaked to the public, have been well-documented (and aired on TV) and are not 'anecdotal'. They make it quite clear that mob violence occurs, not only against genuine sex offenders, but on mistaken identity cases as well. Police officers have been injured and massive criminal damage incurred against the property (and persons) of wholly innocent people.

The Police are already advising against Megan's Law and they are going to be the ones who will have to deal with the aftermath.

The Home Office also say that the information will only be released to those who need to know - but it is undeniable fact that, once released at all, this information has a habit of rapidly getting onto public-access websites, and it's not practical to suggest that such violence-inciting websites can be easily closed down, as they are frequently hosted in other countries.

We in Britain already know what happens when information of this kind is made available to the public. We'd hope that the Home Office can learn from experience, and not release this kind of information. It can do little if any good, and is likely to result in a great deal of harm.

The Home Office has said they want people's views. Please take this opportunity to give them *yours!*

APGAI – OPEN TO ALL MPs. It's come to our attention that a number of MPs are under the impression that they cannot become members of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Abuse Investigations (APGAI), chaired by Claire Curtis-Thomas MP, without an invitation. This, however, is not the case. The APGAI is on the Approved List, there is no subscription payable and ANY Member of either House can attend and vote at any meeting.

NON-PRISON CONTACT ADDRESSES: If you are in prison, and have not supplied us with an alternative contact address, please do it now! Let's not lose touch if you are moved or released.

QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT: Many MPs now realise that there are serious problems with the current situation regarding false allegations, and are asking the thorny questions that raise this issue in Parliament, but there are still a few MP's who are refusing to stand up and be counted and are either reluctant to accept that there is a problem, or are just scared to go public with their concerns.

KITTY USSHER MP has confirmed that "It is right that ministers should and do express opinions on judicial matters and through policy convey the concerns of people."

A PLEA FROM SAFARI! There are only two of us to deal with all the SAFARI paperwork! Please keep your communications as short and to the point as possible. The number of letters and emails we receive increases every month. Sadly, the only way we can deal with the maximum possible number of letters is to put the thick packets at the bottom of the pile!

ENHANCED STATUS: INPUT FROM DR RUTH MANN: We constantly receive letters from prisoners who are refused Enhanced Status as a direct result of maintaining their innocence. We wrote to the Home Secretary, John Reid, on 11th August 2006. He passed our concerns to Dr Ruth Mann, Head of the Sex Offender Treatment Programme at HM Prison Service, who stated: "The issue in the case of offenders who claim they are innocent is with the Sentence Planning process, and not with the SOTP. The Prison Service Order on sentence planning states that: '*Objectives must always be achievable and reflect what opportunities are actually available. ... Objectives must be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound – SMART ...*'. She goes on to say: "Therefore, it is for individual prisoners to negotiate with sentence planning staff what would be a *realistic and achievable objective* for them given their particular circumstances." We will be following this up with Dr Mann – primarily to point out that, whatever the PSO and NOMS state and believe, for the most part sentence planning staff are not open to 'negotiation' of any kind on this issue. We hope eventually to see light at the end of this tunnel.

LETTER TO GOVERNMENT: As promised in our September 2006 newsletter, SAFARI is writing to Government highlighting real cases of prisoners for whom there is strong evidence to suggest they were wrongly convicted, in an effort to achieve changes in the legal system to protect the innocent. Many SAFARI readers supplied us with information about their own cases to be included. We will keep you informed about any response we get.

Thanks to Terry McCarthy (Parole Board for England and Wales) for statistics of those who achieved release on Parole whilst maintaining innocence.			
Figures for month of September 2006			
<i>Non-lifers:</i>			
All offences	9	of 53	17.0%
Rape	0	of 19	0.0%
Indecent Assault	1	of 9	11.1%
Other Sex	0	of 2	0.0%
Violence	2	of 5	40.0%
Property	3	of 6	50.0%
Drugs	2	of 8	25.0%
Others	1	of 4	25.0%
Total Sex	1	of 30	3.3%
Total Non Sex	8	of 23	34.8%
<i>Lifers only</i>	0	of 0	n/a
[No lifers case were considered this month]			