

Greg Clifton's Notes from Interview with Garth Hawkins

Report of interview with G on 28-03-02 in the offices of Baker & Tierney

Present : GKC, TD & CD by telephone. Roger Baker G's solicitor also present.

The interview commenced at 4p.m. and concluded at approximately 5.30 p.m.

GKC began by explaining the role of the assessors. TD & CD also introduced themselves with a brief history of themselves.

TD asked G to give a history of his life in ministry. G replied he was deaconed in 72 and priested in 73. Short curacies at Smithton & Invermay. Then served at Hamilton, East Devonport and Triabunna where he resigned due to ill health in that parish after 8 years. Then went to Avalon Retreat House for recovery for one year. Considering himself recovered he then served as locum in the Pilburra for 3 years.

G described his ill health as nervous breakdown (burnout), alcohol, epilepsy 7 fits. His drinking habits escalated in the Pilburra - suffered dilanton poisoning in Newman & was hospitalised for detox of this.

Moved to Exmouth which he found to be a supportive place- fitting and drinking slowed down but continued. Lost licence to drive there due to blacking out and driving through the church building wall.

Returned to Tasmania about 10 years ago - mid 92. Bought small property in H and lived there in company with his spouse (explained by G as his common law wife).

TD explained the complaint re the East Devonport alleged incident. TD mentioned PA & BYF being present on that occasion.

G could not recall an occasion when PA & BYF were present at the ED Rectory.

G stated that PA would not have allowed such an incident to happen.

G cannot remember having ever met BYF

G could not remember who was there at the time of the alleged incident.

TD explained the alleged incident in detail.

G responded that he had no recollection of the incident and it would be highly unlikely to have taken place with PA in the house.

In reply to questioning G said that young people did not sleep in priest's bedrooms on these occasions.

TD asked G if such an invitation to share his bed would have been proper- G replied that it would not have been proper on moral grounds.

TD asked questions re ethical issues and asked G to comment on this as a priest.

In reply to GKC , G said there was no sexual horseplay on these occasions when young people stayed at the rectory.

In reply to questioning G said that he had a low sexual libido and was always heterosexual. He also replied that he was not commonly attracted to men or women.

TD then gave brief details of the alleged Triabunna incident of 82.

G does not recall the event nor does he have specific remembrance of the alleged incident.

TD gave the names of the people who were alleged to be present at the time.

G again stated that he had no particular of the event.

G said that he knew Geoff Clifford (sic) who was a senior psychological nurse. TD then went on to explain in detail the alleged assault including that [BYF] was sodomised and forced to commit fellatio.

At this stage G's solicitor intervened and asked the age of [BYF] at the time of the alleged offence. He explained that depending on the age of [BY] a criminal offence is alleged. The solicitor said that he was reluctant for G to answer questions of the alleged offence.

G replied that he did not recollect the incident.

In reply to questioning G said that such behaviour was not befitting a priest and that he would not condone such action.

G said he believes that it could not have happened. He could not comment on the scratches.

In reply to questioning G said that if any male person said that they had had a sexual experience with him it would be untrue.

Also in response to questioning G stated that he was not sexually involved with his current spouse during the time he was an active priest.

In response to further questioning G stated that he was surprised that Lou Daniels was there, if he was there.

CD asked what strategy G had for recalling names and events. G explained that names were key ways. He then went on to say that he was heavily medicated- vallium, dilanton etc.

G said that he was dislexic from birth and probably brain damaged from birth. G said that his memory was not good or accurate. G said that his long term memory was a bit better than his short term memory.

CD asked if it is possible that these things could have happened but have been blotted out of the memory. G replied ' not really'.

G said that he had general difficulty in remembering.

TD asked ' If this had happened would you have remembered it ?' G replied " I can't answer" G said that he believes that in the company present then this would not have happened..

G was asked what qualities of leadership he had- His reply " fun person to be with".

TD asked what happens when you are affected by alcohol - reply " happy drunk and sleepy drunk ". G said that he was not a binge drinker but a tippler.

G was asked whether an incident such as this could have happened when he was under the influence of alcohol. He said that he was less likely to drink when people were around.

G was asked whether he found celibacy easy and how did he cope. He replied that he " got pissed". G said that a bottle of claret works better than a bottle of valium.

G stated that his brain damage was well documented and was agreeable to the documentation being made available to the assessors.

Rather than refute the incident G continually replied " I don't know ".

G relied on the fact that others were present as the best indicator that the incident did not take place.

G said that he knew no reason why [BYE] would make such an accusation as this.

POST INTERVIEW . After the interview had concluded and CD was no longer on the telephone but in the presence of TD and G's solicitor, G said there was a matter he wished to talk about.

G said that I (GKC) would notice that the answers he gave at this assessment were different at times to what he gave at the first assessment, in fact, some would be contradictory. He

said that he had misunderstood my questions and that we were at cross purposes. He said that we had been speaking hypothetically.

I said that he would have to discuss the differences with the tribunal if it were called.