

Friday 5 December 1997 - 1.30 p.m.

Present: Mr. Gerard Menses, Chief Executive
Mr. Geoff Blackwood, Manager Human Resources
Mr. Bob Brandenburg, Parish Liaison Officer

Gerard

Bob - (turn on the tape) - I want to ask your permission to tape this discussion. Geoff is going to keep a record of it. Let me tell you what it is so that you can make a decision. It is not a disciplinary but in the course of investigating situations at Harrogate some unsubstantiated, I want to stress that, unsubstantiated allegations about you were made. The person who made these allegations has also said they cannot substantiate them but given the seriousness of them if they were substantiated I feel honour bound just to get your response to them as much to make sure that we can rule a line under things in protect the organisation and what-have-you. I am sorry to have to do this but I just feel morally the organisation has no choice but to do this and I stress these are unsubstantiated.

The response that you make today will really determine whether that is it or whether we need to do something further and I would like to record it as much for your protection as our protection if you are happy with that.

Bob - yes

Gerard - OK

Well I am going to put then to you the allegations that have come forward and as I said what I am seeking to do is just seek some information at this stage and get your response.

It has been alleged that on a number of occasions you took an individual young boy to Harrogate and also to Mylor and that you and he were there unsupervised for lengthy periods. Is that true?

Bob I assume he is referring to **RED** the cleaner.

Gerard No names have been mentioned to me. All I have been told is that you went to the campsites, there was one young man who was frequently there with you but there were a series of young men. The ages of these people have also not been made specific to me but that they were described as boys.

Bob Boys - well 17 - he is the guy at the moment to earn a few extra dollars does our cleaning for us. The only time he has been to Harrogate was on one occasion when he came to help Bob erect the ostrich fence.

Gerard So you are saying that you and this person or you and other boys have not been to Harrogate by yourselves, just the two of you.

Bob I have seven nephews and my niece as you know lives on the adjoining block and we have gone round to Harrogate on occasions to look at the ostriches that sort of thing but I mean I have run camps up there but not in Bob's (time) -

Gerard This allegation is specific to you and a single other person not the fact that you run a camp

Bob Yes

Gerard And you are saying the only occasions when you have been to Harrogate - with yourself and other person - have been when you have taken your nephews or your niece across to the ostriches and that is it

Bob And the one occasion when I used the guy who cleans Mylor to come across and help because Bob was struggling a bit with the fence. That was - that wasn't unsupervised we were with Bob all day.

Gerard You were with Bob all day. OK
So apart from your nephews and nieces you have no been at Harrogate by yourself with a young boy unsupervised?

Bob I am thinking, because I have been to Harrogate a lot of times, how many would I go there, many times I have been I just stay and have a meal with Bob and Val. I mean I have taken.... I have taken REDACTED, I mean I can't remember taking any other, I mean I go during the day.

Gerard So you can't remember taking anyone there apart from your nephews and niece or in terms of running a camp with lots of people. And when you have been there you are saying that if .. you have had a meal with Bob and Val etc. or stay

Bob Well no I don't care if this goes on tape - the other thing I would like - I have been meaning to write to Geoff about this ever since we had the other action - was over the business with Viv Deboo. I was sort of thrown I went about three feet in the air when that question was asked - because that as a member of Executive of the Camping Association - that was a horrific couple of weeks for us. I even had - had REDACTED REDACTED come into this building and nail me because our Executive, that is the Camping Association Executive, took certain actions to rectify or to protect the association as you are probably doing now and I got threatened with action that I had affected the business of Portersfield Caterers. Now as you know ACS were using Portersfield Caterers as were 20 other campsites

Gerard Portersfield Caterers being a catering firm run by

Bob Viv Deboo and REDACTED they were also members of the Camping Association. Now the Camping Association took certain steps and I was in it up to my neck - I had to - I mean Viv was colleague of ours - I mean he was previously a member of the Executive. We had to take - I mean we had to remove him from membership and not only remove him but also advise all our members of the situation and we did it a bit clumsily because we forgot that Portersfield Caterers was a partnership including REDACTED. And now what REDACTED came into to nail me for was that she intended to carry on the business and if we impeded her business or removed her as a member of the association then she would take action against us. I just mention that because that was a hell of a time for me, I mean, we had to seek some legal advice and we went to the Scout Association solicitors and they sort of had to agree that if it was a partnership then she had every right to carry on the partnership, I mean we made sure that we actually didn't use Portersfield Caterers again. We had a couple of bookings at Port Elliott which we carried on but which were done by one of the staff

who actually lived in Port Elliott who did the last two jobs, who now is the caretaker, Church of Christ Longwood Camp.

I also - and getting back to Harrogate - one of the most amazing things in all of this was the Camping Association had its annual meeting at Harrogate as you probably know on the 1st of November now at that stage and this is what I said to Geoff when we were having the interview, I did not realise of the impending actions against Viv Deboo nor did any member of the Executive, I suppose because we are all either based somewhere else or we are in Adelaide. What I heard since was that it was fairly common knowledge in Victor Harbour, when I say common knowledge, I mean there were people who afterwards said to us - oh we heard rumours - and I am not sure whether Bob sort of became very possessive about Harrogate and I suppose afterwards I never actually discussed this with him, I mean the reason why we called Viv in to cook for the annual meeting was a fortnight before. Val rang me up in tears and all upset - she was going to do the catering - she couldn't handle it she couldn't do it and I thought what am I going to do - we had about 60 people booked in for an annual meeting and dinner and no caterer. Now I asked Viv if he could possibly fit it into his schedule. He said yes he could. Now that was an annual meeting and dinner and at that stage I was quite unaware of what was in front of us. So I think in a way Bob has read a few things in the mind association with Viv because Viv did cook for a camp up there a few months before. Now I rang Jenny Cousins afterwards when the whole business had come forward to make sure that Jenny - in fact because she used Harrogate again - and she said look we had no problems at all, she said I read in the paper, you know the proceedings against Viv but she said he was, he did excellent meals and we had no problems with him as far as behaviour or anything else.

Gerard So prior to Viv Deboo's conviction you had - were not aware of any rumours or any evidence.

Bob Not at that stage - yes I can even say this on tape - I got a Christmas card today from John and A... Kramer and when I spoke to John when this all blew up, even John said to me he said Bob I heard things around the streets and he said I just thought they were rumours and he didn't mention it to me either.

Gerard You were unaware

Bob I was totally unaware and that is probably why - I mean it floored me but I mean we got it from both sides, we got it from Margaret who tried it with the business, the business of course floundered as you would expect and they therefore didn't go on to do business in the Association.

Gerard Clearly the unsubstantiated allegations made against you are pointing to a belief or a suggestion that you have engaged in paedophile activities. As such I feel honour bound to directly ask you that question, I feel sorry but I have to do this.

Bob Gerard I have worked with, well as you know I have worked with the Anglican Boys Society, the Church of England Boys Society, I was a youth worker for I don't know, 17 years or something and I - I mean you come across that though I don't but it is not the first time it has

been alleged and I just feel for people I would never run a youth club today or go back into it having run a boys club at Magill for 33 years or something, I would never go back into it today. Because you can see the areas where the things we could do 30 years ago you just would not even - not so much think of doing now, well I suppose you would not proceed with because of the climate of things today.

Gerard I heard in that answer a direct statement that no, whilst you have been a youth worker for many years you have not engaged in paedophile activities. And Bob did I also understand you to say that you were no longer running the boys club at Magill?

Bob No I retired - I had a lovely farewell the year before last and got a nice crystal decanter and tray engraved for my years and there were people there from the whole range of years I was there. But I mean one of the reasons I gave it up was I could see a real minefield in being able to be as free with kids and I mean it is with school kids, you know you sit a kid on your knee now to sort of pacify them it could be ... I mean it is just.

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Bob I feel sorry, I mean I have heard of this because my family have been involved because Bob has made sure that my family were informed of this and they of course wanted more action and I mean I just think I am hoping that now when Bob and Val are sort of unstrained that they will be the people they were when I first met them.

Gerard I should indicate to you that I had advice that I should inform you as to who did make allegations - you implied that you know by stating Bob's name, Bob McGlennon's name. I should advise you that we have warned Mr. McGlennon that his actions may be defamatory if he were to publish this information and we have asked him does he have any evidence to substantiate his allegations and he has replied that no. He has stated that he does not have any evidence to substantiate his allegations and so he has been warned then that it would be defamation were he to make them. However as I said at the beginning, given the nature of this organisation, I just feel honour bound that I have to put allegations to you and get your response, as I said this is just an information gathering exercise.

I need now to consider your response and inform you if any further action will be required. I can't think of any other questions I need to ask at this time because I think I have covered the extent of the allegations that were put.

Is there any other statement that you wish to make?

Bob No

Gerard OK - so in summary then I understand you to have said the following directly and indirectly:

1. That you have not attended the Harrogate campsite with individuals, young men, apart from your nephews and niece and then it was just to visit, look at the ostriches and they were your neighbours. You have not engaged in paedophile activities, or activities that could be construed as such. And you are no longer engaged in activities with youth anyway in any official capacity, or unofficial.

The other question I have got to ask you directly is - there are allegations that you have attended Mylor campsite by yourself with young men. You responded about Harrogate you haven't specifically responded to Mylor.

Bob The chappie I took to Harrogate that day to help with the fence is the cleaner at Mylor and he cleans Mylor. I am there with him sometimes if there has been something other than a cleaning problem then I if a tree has fallen down, if he rings and says there is no water, there is no electricity, I have been up there, there are occasions when I have taken RED up there if we were both going I would say - go in my car. And he has been cleaning Mylor for 18 months

Gerard So you have been at Mylor with just RED for the purpose of cleaning the campsite and assisted with the cleaning of the campsite. Have you been at Mylor with any other individual?

Bob I have been there with other individuals but not, I mean I take people there all the time because of the campsite, I have taken school teachers and three or four kids or I have taken students from the university there to look at the place.

Gerard But you have not been there with young boys or young girls unsupervised -

Bob No

Gerard One on one

Well I am sorry to have had to put all those questions to you but it is really important that we do the investigation

Bob I half expected it because as I say I was aware these allegations were being made.

Gerard And as I said I now need to consider the information that you have given, on the basis of the information you have given without prejudice I would suspect no further action will be required. I just need to consider that and I will get back to you as quickly as possible.

Bob I was aware before you even started the interview where they have come from so I am at liberty to speak with the person making the allegations, I mean

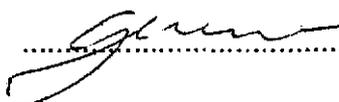
Gerard Well I frankly advise and ask you not to, we have certainly directed you in relation to other matters with the occupational health and safety and the termination proceedings that were going on, not to talk to Bob about anything other than ostriches and frankly Bob it would be my advice to you that you do that. He has been warned, I believe that it would be unwise for you to talk with him over these matters.

Bob Yes - I am sure - as I say I think the bridges will be healed just with talking ostriches and getting back - just what I hope we do in the future.

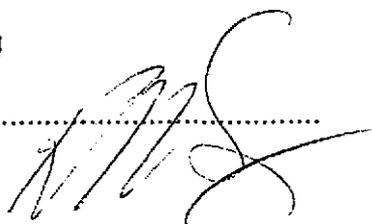
Gerard All right - that concludes this interview. Thank you for allowing us to tape it and as I said I will let you know as soon as possible if I need to take any further action but as I said on the basis of what we have said so far and without prejudice case I suspect that will be the end of it.

End tape.

I agree this is an accurate recording



G. GARDNER
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Bob Gardner