

Copy of letter received from Mr and Mrs REDACTED

"I am writing on behalf of my wife and myself to advise of the sequences of events and discussions relating to the sexual abuse of our son BYB by John Litton Elliot.

A casual remark and subsequent discussion regarding child abuse revealed that at least two of our three sons had been the victims of such abuse. This discovery took place on 7th July 1993. Further discussions with our sons revealed that the offences took place within the Church of England Boys' Society while we were parishioners at St Barnabas Church, Sunnybank, Brisbane and at the Anglican Church Grammar School Brisbane where BYB was a student. We discovered that by far the worst abuse had occurred to BYB our second son, although he would not tell us the nature of the offences as we would find them too upsetting. The perpetrator of these crimes was John Litton Elliot who was a family friend, leader of the CEBS Group, Bursar at the AGC School and subsequently ordained priest. He was Rector of the parish at Dalby at the time of these revelations.

We decided that because of our long and close association with the church and also that the offender was a priest, we would initially advise the church authorities.

Bishop John Noble who had previously been our parish priest was contacted and an immediate interview was arranged. My wife, our third son REDACT (who had also been abused), and I attended this meeting. Alarmed at what he heard Bishop Noble advised he would contact Archbishop Hollingworth with the details.

The following morning the Archbishop phoned to confirm the details of our interview with Bishop Noble. During this discussion the Archbishop said – "paedophiles are never cured" and that he would be talking to John Elliot and also BYB

Within a few days Archbishop Hollingworth phoned to say he had just finished interviewing John Elliot who had admitted his guilt and confessed to all the offences. John Elliot now wanted to come out to our home to see us. The Archbishop asked that I phone him the next day to report on Elliot's visit.

Elliot's attitude was all self pity. It was all "poor me" and that he was sad that he would never see BYB again. Another comment he made was that "No harm was done". At no time did he ask for forgiveness or express any kind of remorse. My wife and I were sickened by his attitude and presence.

I duly phoned the Archbishop and related what had occurred with Elliot. He was not surprised by Elliot's attitude or lack of remorse saying

these were common traits with paedophiles and again said that they "are never cured". His next step was to interview BYB and then he would contact us regarding Elliot's future.

We heard nothing from the Archbishop but met him at a church function on 3rd December 1993 where I approached him regarding the Elliot outcome. He asked that we arrange for an interview at his office. The meeting took place on 20th December 1993. The attached letter relates to this interview.

In September 1995 our eldest son RED was visiting from Melbourne and saw how traumatised the family and more especially BYB were. Unknown to us REDA wrote to Archbishop Hollingworth on 8th September 1995 expressing concern regarding the Archbishop's attitude and handling of Elliot's crimes. Upon receipt of REDA letter the Archbishop phoned us to ask what had happened to cause REDA to write. My wife told him that RED had seen the damage that had been done to us all and that in the eyes of the boys justice had not been done as Elliot was still Rector at Dalby and preaching the word of God. Archbishop Hollingworth's reply to that statement was 'Yes' and that he would reply to the letter. On receiving the Archbishop's letter dated 11 September 1995 Mark phoned to say how upset he was by its insulting tone.

Shortly after this we were at a wedding where Bishop Noble was a fellow guest. He approached us and apologised on behalf of the church for the tone of the letter sent to REDA. He stated that the Archbishop had shown him the letter and he had urged the Archbishop not to send it because of its offensive tone. This advice was ignored.

We should say here that right from 1993 when we first learned of this dreadful and agonising crime BYB had asked us not to discuss the subject of his abuse as he was trying to put it out of his mind and cope with it as best he could. We respected his wishes. We were not aware that he was not coping very well and was in fact receiving psychiatric help. On 26 December 2001 BYB became distressed and we learned that he was still very traumatised. We were then able to share with him how the whole family had been let down by the church authorities. This knowledge coupled with his own experiences prompted him to try to bring a closure to the matter in view of the church's failure to act. BYB then contacted the police and his Solicitor.

My wife and I have been active members of the church all our lives filling nearly all of the lay positions available at one time or another. Among our various roles my wife was church organist and director of music for twenty five years and I was a liturgical assistant for twenty years during which time I tested my vocation for the priesthood spending twelve months as a student at St Francis Theological College Brisbane. Our whole lives have revolved around the church but now our perceptions and expectations of the church we loved have been

crushed. We trust that this information is of help in ensuring that the events which overtook our family do not occur again and that the attitudes and cultures within the church that allow these events to happen our changed.

If further information is required please do not hesitate to contact me."

The attached letter which **REDACT** "relates to this interview" was a letter written to Mr Bruce Brown of Shine Roach McGowan on 25 February 2002 by **REDACTED**. That letter read:

*"In reference to the above matter, I recently returned draft copies of statements made by my wife **RED** and me at our interview with you on 10/01/02."*

*We wish to add to our statements the following details relating to the interview **RED** and I had with Archbishop Hollingworth on 20/12/93. These details are sent to clarify and/or put into some sequential (sic) order some of the interview we had on that date.*

The details are as follows:

*"At the beginning of our interview we stated that our son **REDACT** had made an appointment with a Solicitor. We asked him to put a hold on that so that we could speak to the church about these serious matters. Hollingworth said that it was better to handle these matters "in-house". During the interview with Hollingworth I urged him to dismiss Elliot from the church stating he was not a fit and proper person to be a priest. Hollingworth said he would not dismiss Elliot because at age 62 he (Elliot) would find it difficult to secure another job. I then suggested Elliot be given a position somewhere within the organisation of the church but away from a parish situation because he (Hollingworth) himself had said that 'paedophiles are never cured'. Hollingworth said he would not do that either. I asked him why and he said that Elliot had only been in Dalby for about twelve months and that as the previous priest had left the parish somewhat "under a cloud" if Elliot was removed now questions would be asked by the Dalby congregation. I suggested that if questions were asked reasons such as personal, health or family matters could be given. Hollingworth again said that Elliot would remain at Dalby but under the following conditions:*

- 1. That if a CEBS group is in operation it has to be closed down.*
- 2. Elliot undertake psychiatric counselling and reports to Hollingworth on a monthly basis.*
- 3. Elliot retires at age 65, because he will then be eligible for a pension and would then be finished with church ministry.*

(Despite this third condition Hollingworth allowed Elliot to continue in church ministry for several years after his retirement by allowing him to

act as a locum in parishes. This continued until Elliot was charged by the police with other child sexual abuse offences. Only then did the church revoke his license).

I again said that it was not appropriate that Elliot should remain as a priest. Hollingworth then said that after discussing the matter with the Regional Bishop (Clyde Wood) he had decided that "it is better to upset one family than a whole parish" and therefore Elliot would remain at Dalby.

It was obvious that as far as Hollingworth was concerned the matter was closed and the interview was terminated.

The above statement concerning the family being upset completely stunned us. We felt diminished and violated. That he could speak to the parents of a victim in such a way was incomprehensible and demonstrated how insensitive he was to this most serious matter. We formed the impression that Hollingworth was more concerned about Elliot's welfare than he was about David in his agony or our feelings. At no time were we offered any help to overcome our anguish. We thought this odd in view of the fact that Elliot had admitted to Hollingworth that these child sexual abuse offences had occurred.

At no time in our discussions with Hollingworth, before, during or since our interview on 20/12/93 did he suggest that these admitted offences should be referred to the police.

Please add the above details to our original statements."