

Notes re Anthony Foster**17 December 1996**

I rang Anthony Foster who obviously knew who I was and called me Peter. I first spoke to a person whom, I presume, was his wife. After some adjustments of getting people out of the way he commenced to speak and to speak freely.

I told him that I did not know anything of him other than he had rung for an appointment and I then asked him whether he was concerned with Emma. He then asked me what I knew about Emma, I told him that I knew not much but that I was concerned that he had rung for an appointment and not kept it, though I hastened to allay his misunderstanding that I was complaining about him not having rung about the appointment, which in fact, as I pointed out to him, he had. I told him I was not concerned about him not keeping the appointment but if I could be of assistance I would be anxious to be.

To summarise a very lengthy discussion, he spoke of Emma as having been a person who suffered very significant abuse apparently at the hands of O'Donnell whilst at Oakleigh at a time, presumably, when she was 6 or 7. He says the psychiatric advice is that she was repeatedly and seriously assaulted.

Jumping forward a little, he later said it was necessary for them to do everything they could to keep Emma alive. I asked him in that context whether she was suicidal and he said she was. He instanced an attempt just a while ago.

Whilst a bright student, she has given up school - that is the end of that - and what they are trying to do is to in effect rehabilitate her.

He then told me that the reason that he was wanting to come with Emma and his wife to see me was because of an incident with Bongiorno. He asked me

whether I knew of Tony Bongiorno, and I said I did, namely, that he was the parish priest at Brunswick etc. He then said that Bongiorno was on the phone in his brother's or cousin's house, REDACTED in REDACTE in March of this year (pending trial) and Bongiorno said in respect of Emma, who was standing nearby that she is looking well but I don't think she is wearing a slip, no she is not wearing a slip. This produced a serious reaction in Emma because, as Foster said, of her previous relationship with O'Donnell.

Foster said this was stated in the presence of many relatives of Bongiorno, whom he said were convinced of Bongiorno's innocence, which was no doubt confirmed by the result of the trial.

Foster then, for the first time sounded a little bit erratic, said that he believed a REDACTED had suffered from abuse by him.

He then asked some questions about Bongiorno and I told him he could presume that Bongiorno was under evaluation.

He then went on to discuss O'Donnell with whom he said Bongiorno had been present at Oakleigh, or words to that effect. He then also spoke about a situation at Doveton, though he may have meant Boronia. He spoke of complaints by a teacher who had lost her job because of complaints about sexual abuse and that I think he was meaning REDACTED

He then said to me that he had anecdotal evidence of at least 8 parish priests who were currently working and who were alleged offenders. I told him anecdotal evidence was always difficult because so much of it is based upon hearsay and rumour, and I said I would be very interested for him to tell me about this because that is what I would want to investigate. He then said that all this could be discovered in the files of the PRO.

I told him that I had demanded the files of the PRO.

He told me that he had discussed me with a fellow QC, who told him he ought to come and see me because it might help Emma. He stressed that all that he was really concerned with was not revenge or anything like that but to try and do the best that could be done for Emma. With this sentiment I of course expressed obvious agreement.

I told him that I would be very happy to talk to him with or without his wife and Emma on any occasion. He told me he might leave it until the new year. I told him that I would be available. I told him that I would write to him and forward him a copy of the terms of my appointment.

There were a few other matters he mentioned which, I must confess, I cannot immediately recollect but which I do not think were of great significance.