

I am back in
Sydney, Monday
11/7/1994



CHRISTIAN BROTHERS' RESIDENCE
"CLONTARF"

295 Manning Road
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Phone: (09) 458 9693

(Confidential)

Re: Lost Children of the Empire.

Br. Barry Coldrey,

From Nov. 9th. to Dec. 9. 1992.

During this month I have stayed at Clontarf and have met with the following "Old Boys" of Castledare and Clontarf, and the following is a list of them and their general view of their childhood.

a) VU

Has a very closed mind on the issues, is very dismissive of old boys who could have problems. Is very supportive of the Brothers and perhaps sees himself as a shield to protect the Brothers from 'malcontents'. He is at present the president of the Old Boys, though of course have no vision and cannot begin to address the issues of physical or sexual abuse. He points to his own success and position within his family and society, and of course as president of 'old boys', and is inclined to blame failure in adult life for the rise of the 'malcontents,'

b) VM

A wonderfully loyal 'old boy' who has not complained of mistreatment, and is shocked by claims of physical and sexual abuse by others. VM is very concerned that he might have run out of time to find his mother, and finds it difficult to come to terms with his being sent to Australia as a child migrant. He is passionately loyal to the Church and especially the Brothers. I have reported his case to "Westcourt" and Catholic Child Migration. If relations are found it will be necessary to assist reunion expenses as I feel that he will need his wife present to support him during the experience.

TO : MR. GERARD PHILLIPS.

These comments on some VOICES activists were sent to me by Br. Bert Mc Gregor. They may assist. As I was sorting material they turned up. Don't tell Bert you have them.

c) VP

In the presence of Br. P.B. Doyle we visited VP [redacted]. For two hours he poured out his complaints, bascally dealing with physical and sexual abuse, particularly Br. H. Murphy. At the same time he is prepared to see other forms of discipline and supposed 'abuse' as but accepted though faulty practices of the time. He is not emotive and tells his story with a certain detachment. This give his account a certain power and of course conviction. Walter would love to be reunited with his family, he comes from Glasgow and I have passed on his case to Catholic Child Migration. He expects little to come from Church or Government.

d) VN

VN [redacted] is a paraplegic living in a country town in Western Australia. He talks of lack of care and physical hardships as a child, and lack of education. He is bitter but optimistic about his personal future. He has once returned to England to find his family, but failed leaving an open letter in the local newspaper. Br.P.O'Doherty was present at this meeting.

e) VO

Works for the Returned Soldiers Organization, processing claims, ex,Vietenam. Very presentable and self reliant. Is concerned about the method of choosing children for migration to Australia. Has an open mind on physical and sexual abuse issues. Feels that the Old Boys Association is not effective. Has found his family in Britain and seems content.

f) VR

A disturbing character, who has a fixation about being abandoned. Has been reunited with his mother but the experience has not settled him. He has independent means and is proud of his financial success and lets one know. He seems to be interested in the behaviour of the child in us all, as his stories centre on deviant sexual behaviours. I was disturbed and concerned after both meetings with VR [redacted] and wonder whether his is the right one to be meeting so many old boys.

To: MR. GERARD PHILLIPS.

11/07 '94 13:11

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CHRISTIAN BROS

+++ CARROLL O'DEA

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To: MR. GERARD PHILLIPS.

g) VS

VS is concerned that he might have missed out on meeting his mother. Much of his family has been traced, but apparently the mother had moved away from Northern Ireland possibly to U.S.A. Chicago. He is very poor and though would love a trip to the relations that do write to him from Northern Ireland and Scotland cannot find the means to do so, and is afraid to make the effort in case his mother is confirmed and found to be in U.S.A. VS is dependent on his wife REDACT who has searched out for him and compiled two thick files on his history. I feel that it is important to follow up the identity of one Mrs. VL REDACTED was she formerly Miss REDACTED, then Mrs. REDACT?

I feel that funding for a visit to his mother if found to be still living, then to Northern Ireland will be needed. VS is very much like FVM and will only make such a visit with the presence and support of his wife Peggy.

On questions of child abuse VS does not enter into discussion, but on the question of being sent out to Australia he is disturbed that he was 'kidnapped.' He is particularly concerned that nobody seems to be interested in helping him in giving information. VS is still a quiet and reflective type of person.

h) VQ

VQ, a confirmed bachelor and a cheerful personality. He is realistic and speaks very well and with much logic and sense. He makes allowances for the times, but is inclined to believe stories of child abuse, especially what he terms, 'there was not a day when I didn't see a child crying because of beatings'. He is proud of the fact that he is a survivor, and relates a story of sexual abuse in a humorous style. He has found his parents but has no desire to visit, happy in his present life style and proud of his job. Lives alone in a boarding house.

i) VT

A very disturbed personality, who all the time threatened to go straight to the police and make out a charge of sexual and physical abuse against the Brothers. He believes that if this was to happen the police will investigate, for he knows the law and has spent time before the courts and in prison. He blames his disastrous life on his traumatic childhood. He talks of sexual abuse from at least three Brothers. He holds all Brothers to blame, for superiors should have acted on knowledge they were given. He speaks of many boys suffering sexual abuse. His favourite saying is "they stole my soul, and now they will pay for it." VT is very impatient for retribution to come. VT was originally from Birmingham and came to Castledare or Clontarf in the early 1950's. He claims to be in my group but really I cannot remember him. All present at this meeting agreed that VT requires immediate help. At present he is staying with VL.

11/07 '94 13:12

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CHRISTIAN BROS →→→ CARROLL O'DEA

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To: MR. G. PHILLIPS.

j) VL

I had heard of VL, and his moving among the old boys, and expected my meeting to be more firey, but instead he was very subdued. He is absolutely convinced of the 'child slave labour' stories, though says that he himself was not a victim of sexual abuse. He believes that sexual abuse was widespread though in his case he appeared to be programmed. He resents the poor educational opportunities. He along with VT have placed their faith in "VOICES" and expect one day to receive a payout from the Brothers for the abuses and traumas of their childhood.

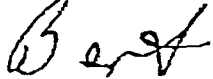
j) Albert McGregor.

My story is with Br. Coldrey, and I only know mine. It is disturbing to hear repeated the experiences of my childhood as for many years I thought I was the sole victim. I am convinced now that there is need for widespread publicity of the counselling that is available as well as funding for such counselling and aid to return to natural families. The most disturbing aspect of family reunion in my case was being so far removed that when eventually reconciliation was desired in 1950 the information was not acted upon, nor was any information forwarded to them on request. I quote Cannon McWilliams, "Your son is in Australia and you will never see him again." It is further disturbing to discover that there is not one piece of file information in any of Government or Church files to confirm the events good or bad of 15 years in their care. Apart from the Birth Certificate and the shipping information, I never existed.

The above is the result of the few weeks here at Clontarf when for the first time in my life I have deliberately returned to Clontarf to lay to rest my childhood. I have no problems with my God, but the events described above only convince me that sometime just one of His servants can do great moral, mental, emotional and physical damage, and I pray that in my life as a Brother God will preserve me from such a fall. I pray for all, for all in many ways are victims of a system that was flawed. I hope I can leave childhood behind me and continue my life as a Brother.

I hope the following report is of some use and that any relevant information will be acted upon. This report is a sample study showing perhaps that there is need for a worker to move among the 'Old Boys' in order to do a more serious needs study. However, the need for counselling and the need for family reunions to be hurried up already comes through in this small sample. The allegations are not new, but perhaps once a picture of the men making them is drawn, they will receive more understanding.

Yours in Christ,



Br. J.A. McGregor. CFC. BA. MED.