

RE: MINISTERIAL REPRESENTATIONS IN RESPECT OFSatayanda Yoga ASHRAM

SUBJECT OF REPORT: APH [REDACTED] (A.K.A. APH [REDACTED]) b. REDA [REDACTED] /71  
 [REDACTED] (A.K.A. [REDACTED])  
 b. RED [REDACTED] /73

I refer to your recent request for information regarding Departmental involvement with children having contact with the Ashram movement.

On 19 March 1987, a notification was received at Newcastle (then) Community Welfare Centre in respect of a sexual assault allegation involving 2 children who were members of the Ashram movement. These children, APH [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], are the children of the leaders of the Ashram movement in Newcastle, situated at [REDACTED], Newcastle.

The information contained in the notification alleged that APH [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had been sexually abused by a male friend of the family in whose care they had been placed the previous year. The alleged offender was said to be the leader of the Ashram Movement at Mangrove Mountain, namely Akanandanda SARASWATI, who it was alleged had been charged with several counts of sexual assault on children. Prior to any action being taken this information was confirmed to me by Det. Sgt. Arthur Webber from Juvenile Services Bureau.

On 2nd April, 1987, in the company of school counsellor, Dawn Webb, at Newcastle High School, I interviewed APH [REDACTED]. Her brother REDAC [REDACTED] was seen, but not interviewed due to additional information being received which indicated his lack of involvement with the alleged offender.

The children are known at school as APH [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and will be referred to as such herein.

When interviewed, APH [REDACTED] gave an account of the time spent with the alleged perpetrator at Mangrove Mountain. She stated that both herself and her brother, REDA [REDACTED] had been left in the care of Swami Akanandanda Saraswati and his de facto wife, "Sishi" or "Cissy", when their parents went to Canberra in 1985-86. APH [REDACTED] described her relationship with the couple at the time, as being extremely close, particularly with "Cissy". APH [REDACTED] stated that she had very quickly become aware that the Swami Saraswati had been "sexually abusing" other girls. She said that she had become conscious of the fact that the Swami was beginning to make advances to her and had noticed a similar pattern emerging with her as she had seen with other females (who she considered to be "victims"); that is "special" attention and gifts of sweets etc. which were not readily given to others. She considered that she might well be targeted as the next "victim" and said that soon after this, the Swami had touched her on the breast. From that time she became aware of her vulnerability to his advances. She stated her determination not to become his next "victim" and decided to circumvent this by actively avoiding being alone in his company.

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When her parents had returned, she had made them aware of the circumstances, and informed them of her reluctance to be in his company. she said that they had been disbelieving of her and had demonstrated their total commitment to Swami Saraswati as their leader. She claimed that from this time, she had "kept an eye on REDA" although she was not really concerned for his safety as she knew that the Swami liked girls and also that he had not taken a great deal of interest in REDA. She assured me that during their time at Mangrove Mountain, REDA had not been alone in his company.

Following this interview, arrangements were made to interview the children's parents, and a subsequent 'phone call was made to arrange this. Mr. API, after discussing my request for an interview with himself and his wife, stated that he did not wish for Departmental officers to visit his home, thus agreed to come to Newcastle Centre for an interview. He was subsequently interviewed on 3rd April in the company of Laurie Carroll, D.O. He was made aware of the situation regarding the allegations and of the Department's responsibility in protecting his children in view of these allegations. Mr. API gave assurance that the children would not be left alone with Swami Saraswati, although, he said, given his position in the movement it would be very difficult for him not to have contact with him.

On the basis of no abuse having been confirmed on the children, the matter was subsequently filed.

Additional to the above information, approximately 6 - 8 weeks ago, I answered a 'phone call from a male person whose name I believe to be that of the writer of the attached document, Peter Wakeman. This person, after seeking information from clerical staff, presented himself to me as the father of a girl who had stayed with Swami Saraswati during the father's absence overseas.

He claimed to be "very concerned" at having received information regarding charges against Swami Saraswati and sought information on my involvement with matters in respect of this.

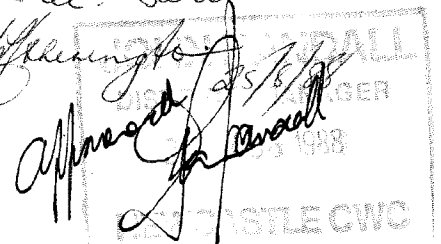
I advised this person that I had interviewed a child, whose name or details of the matter I was not at liberty to disclose. I also informed him of my knowledge of the charges against Swami Saraswati, but that any information he sought would need to be obtained from Det. Sgt. Webber from Juvenile Services.

Immediately upon terminating the above conversation, I received an urgent message from a person from North East Met. Region, advising me that I would be receiving a 'phone call from the person who I believe was named as Mr. Wakeman. The advice given via a member of the clerical staff was that I should be "very careful what I told him".

I have had no further involvement in this matter to this date.

*Shirley Hetherington*  
SHIRLEY HETHERINGTON  
C.P.W. - NEWCASTLE DISTRICT CENTRE  
18/8/88

For Information:- G. Strang, Operations Manager - Hunter

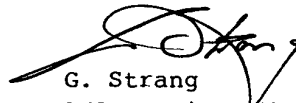


TO ALL DISTRICT MANAGERS

Re: MINISTERIAL REPRESENTATIONS IN RESPECT OF  
SAIYANANDA YOGA ASHRAM

Saiyananda Yoga Ashram is situated in Mangrove Mountain, NSW. Representations have been made on behalf of Swami Akhandananda Saraswati concerning proceedings. If any District Manager is aware of this organisation or children involved with it, could they please contact me immediately.

Yours sincerely,



G. Strang  
A/Operations Manager  
HUNTER.

cc. District Manager, Hamilton  
District Manager, Charlestown  
District Manager, Newcastle  
District Manager, Belmont

D. M. CARDIFF

*C.P.M. Newcastle Office rang 15/8/88  
knows of a case. Requested papers.*

*D. M. Newcastle*

*[Signature]*  
AOM  
15/8/88