

WE ARE THE PARENTS OF LB WHO WENT TO ST ANN'S SPECIAL SCHOOL BETWEEN REDACT .  
LB WAS A HAPPY, FRIENDLY BOY WHO ENJOYED BEING WITH HIS FAMILY, GOING ON OUTINGS & SCHOOL. HOWEVER IN THE YEAR OF 1991 LB BEHAVIOUR & Demeanour CHANGED. HE BECAME FEARFUL OF ANYONE WHO CAME TO THE FRONT DOOR. HIS REACTION WAS THAT HE WOULD RUN AND HIDE IN WARDROBES, OR UNDER THE BED. HE DIDN'T LIKE TO GO ON THE PUBLIC/SCHOOL BUS. HE HATED CROWDED PLACES, AND LOUD NOISES, OR NOISY PEOPLE. HE WOULD STAY CLOSE TO MUM ALL THE TIME. IN THE YEARS FROM APPROXIMATELY 1989 TO 1991 THE SCHOOL BUS WAS LATE ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS, AND ON THE OCCASIONS UP TO AN HOUR LATE. IN THIS PERIOD THE SCHOOL WAS ONLY 15 MINUTES AWAY FROM HOME IN PEAK TRAFFIC. ON EACH OCCASION OF THE BUS BEING LATE THE SCHOOL WAS CALLED. EXCUSES SUCH AS BUS BREAK DOWN, STUDENTS BEING DISRUPTIVE ON THE BUS OR A MEDICAL PROBLEM WERE THE EXCUSES THAT WERE GIVEN.

BRIAN PERKINS (THE BUS DRIVER) CONVINCED US A SLEEPOVER ORGANISED WITH WHAT HE SAID WAS WITH SCHOOL PERMISSION AT THE SCHOOL (FRIDAY NIGHT). WE PICKED LB AT THE DESIGNATED TIME ON SATURDAY. HE WAS THE ONLY STUDENT LEFT TO BE PICKED UP. PERKINS SAID THE OTHERS HAD ONLY JUST LEFT. ONE TO 2 WEEKS LATER A WEEKEND CAMP WAS ORGANISED WITH SCHOOL PERMISSION (AS SAID BY PERKINS) AS HE WAS USING THE SCHOOL BUS. HE PICKED UP LB AM SATURDAY BY SCHOOL BUS, AND DROPPED OFF USING HIS OWN VAN ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON. PERKINS SAID HE HAD TO RETURN THE BUS FOR CLEANING SO THAT IT WOULD BE READY FOR SCHOOL ON MONDAY MORNING. LB WAS VERY QUIET NOT HIS USUAL PLAYFUL OR CHEEKY SELF.

IN LATE AUGUST 1991, CLAUDE HAMMAN ST ANN'S SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AT THE TIME RANG SAYING HE NEEDED TO SEE US AS THERE WAS A PROBLEM HE NEEDED TO DISCUSS WITH US IN PERSON. FROM THIS STATEMENT FROM CLAUDE HE GAVE THE INDICATION THAT HE CLAUDE AND US LB PARENTS WERE TO SEE HIM IN PERSON. WHEN WE ARRIVED AT THE SCHOOL WE WERE TAKEN TO A ROOM AND OTHER PEOPLE WERE PRESENT SITTING IN A SEMI CIRCLE WITH TWO CHAIRS PLACED IN FRONT FOR US. THE ROOM USED WAS SMALL FOR SO MANY PEOPLE. PRESENT AT THIS SO CALLED MEETING WERE A POLICE OFFICER FROM DARLINGTON POLICE STATION, A PERSON FROM FAMILY AND YOUTH SERVICES, A PERSON FROM CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE, CLAUDE AND HIS SECRETARY (WHO TOOK NOTES) .

WE WERE TOLD THAT A COMPLAINT OF SEXUAL ABUSE BY PERKINS HAD BEEN MADE AND IT WAS BELIEVED LB MAY BE ONE OF THE STUDENTS INVOLVED. NO DETAILS WERE GIVEN AS TO WHEN OR WHERE, OR OTHERS INVOLVED. WHEN WE ASKED IF WE WERE THE ONLY FAMILY NOTIFIED. WE WERE TOLD A COUPLE OF OTHER FAMILIES WERE ALSO SPOKEN TO. IN ADDITION CLAUDE ALSO INFORMED US THAT PERKINS HAD BEEN SACKED. WE WERE INFORMED TO SAY NOTHING TO ANYONE AS AN INVESTIGATION WAS BEING LAUNCHED AND WE COULD JEOPARDISE THE INVESTIGATION AND WOULD BE AGAINST THE LAW TO DISCUSS THIS DISCLOSURE. WHEN WE ASKED WHERE WE COULD GET HELP AND SUPPORT, NO INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE WAS GIVEN. THIS LACK OF SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE CONTINUED FOR ANOTHER TEN YEARS.