

Statement of Diana Dimos

IN THE ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Case Study 37: Performing Arts Centres

Statement of: Diana Dimos

Address: [REDACTED] NSW [REDACTED]

Occupation: Dance Teacher at Village on Broadway, 85 O'Riordan Street, Alexandria

Date of Birth: [REDACTED] 1973

Date: 16 February 2016

I, Diana Dimos, of [REDACTED], in the state of New South Wales, say as follows:

1. I am currently employed as a dance teacher at the Dance Academy Village on Broadway at 85 O'Riordan Street, Alexandria.
2. Where in this statement:
 - (a) I give evidence of conversations, the words used are to the effect of those spoken;
 - (b) Except where I otherwise indicate, I make this statement from my own knowledge; and
 - (c) I depose to matters from information and belief, then I believe that information to be true and correct in every material aspect.
 - (d) I make this statement in response to the Letter from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, dated 22 January 2016 and the Annexure A attached to that same letter.
3. I hold a diploma in modern dance obtained from the Federal Association of Teachers of Dancing (FATD) having progressed to this level from the age of four (4) years old, until obtaining the diploma in and around 1995.
4. Prior to my involvement with RG Dance, I had been employed on a casual basis at six dance schools being; Goodhew Academy for Dance, Moriah College, Nadine's Academy of Dance, Cassa Jazz, Arncliffe Public School and Penshurst After-School Care.
5. At each of these schools I was never required to produce a 'Working with Children' clearance nor was I advised of any reporting procedures in respect of complaints or allegations of child sexual abuse.

6. The dancing curriculum for the Federal Association of Teachers of Dancing (FATD) did not include material or guidance in respect of any working with children obligations nor was I ever requested to provide a 'Working with Children' clearance.
7. In January 2007, two of my colleagues suggested that I enroll my daughter into RG Dance, located at 15 – 17 Bibby Street, Chiswick, the Directors being Rebecca Davies and Grant Davies ("**RG Dance**") because it was a good dance school and its location was close to my home.
8. In or around February 2007 I enrolled my two (2) year old daughter at RG Dance. I specifically spoke to Jennifer Davies (i.e. Rebecca and Grant Davies' sister) when I enrolled my daughter into RG Dance I was also aware that Susan Davies (i.e. Rebecca and Grant Davies' mother) and John Barnier (i.e. Jennifer Davies' husband) worked on-site at RG Dance.
9. During this time, Jennifer Davies taught my daughter (who was two (2) years old) and as such this interaction was on a parent and teacher basis, as opposed to a relationship between colleagues.
10. About a month following the enrolment of my daughter to RG Dance, in or around March 2007 whilst I was sitting in the foyer of the dance studio, Susan Davies approached me as she recognized me from my association with FATD. She asked if I could teach a few of Grant's classes. She said words to the effect:
"Can you cover some of Grant's classes as he's gone away for a while?"
11. I agreed because I enjoy both teaching and dance and believed that as Grant was on holiday.
12. I was not asked for nor was a 'Working with Children' clearance mentioned at any stage. There was no induction or training provided or discussed with Jennifer Davies, Rebecca Davies, Susan Davies or John Barnier. I was not provided or advised of any policies or requirements, nor was I asked to provide any documentation as relating to qualifications or other credentials before commencing work. This did not concern me, or did it occur to me at the time, as this was standard practice in my experience in the dance school industry.
13. I began to teach contemporary dance classes on a casual basis approximately two (2) to three (3) times per week at RG Dance.
14. In about April 2007, I began teaching Jazz Class and a 'Mothers & Baby' class, in addition to the Contemporary dance classes I was teaching.
15. In or about May 2007, Grant Davies returned to the RG Dance.
16. In and around this time, I received phone calls from dancing colleagues (of whom I had met in the wider dance community) telling me about rumours they had heard about Grant Davies in relation to his students and warning me to be careful and to consider removing my daughter and leaving RG Dance. I do not recall the words used, but the effect of these rumours was that I thought that Grant Davies was 'dodgy' and no good.
17. I immediately contacted Five Dock Police Station. I said words to the effect of:

"I have a young daughter enrolled in RG Dance and I also teach a few classes there. I have some concerns because I have heard negative things about the Director – Grant Davies. I don't want my daughter or myself to stay at a school associated with anything inappropriate with teachers and students".

18. The Police told me that they could not disclose any information about Grant Davies or on any matters. However, they advised me in words to the effect of:

"If he is teaching, it means we have nothing in respect of the rumours and that he is free to, fit and able to teach".

19. When I spoke to the Police, the Police Officer did not advise me of any other agency responsible for child protection or any mandatory reporting obligations. At the time, I believed this was a matter that was handled by the Police, and I felt that the Police Officer had confirmed this.
20. As a result of what I was told by the police officer, I continued working at RG Dance and allowed my daughter to continue her classes at RG Dance. I was satisfied by the assurance given to me by Five Dock Police and believed that what my ex-colleagues had told me were merely rumours, which as the Police had told me were not substantiated.
21. In 2009 when my daughter turned four (4) years old and moved into Rebecca Davies' 'Advanced' class and we (i.e. Rebecca Davies and I) interacted on a parent and teacher basis.
22. I did not at any time observe any activity which suggested sexual or inappropriate conduct at RG Dance. I never had a conversation with any student who made a complaint, or suggested anything, of this nature.
23. Between the period of 2007 to 2010 at RG Dance I had no specific contact with [BZH]. However, in or around June 2011, [BZH] began to speak with me during and in between classes in the foyer of RG Dance or just outside the studio premises.
24. From approximately 2011, [BZH] would ask for my advice in relation to progressing her daughters' dancing careers. Her daughters are [BZG] and [BZF] who were approximately eleven (11) years old and twelve (12) years old respectively.
25. In or around February 2012, [BZH] asked me in words to the effect:
- "If Grant isn't giving my daughters enough attention, where do you think they should go".*
26. My interaction with [BZH] was limited to these short discussions at RG Dance. I did not socialize with her outside of the school nor on a social level.
27. In or about November 2012, [BZH] told me about a trip, Grant had taken [BZF] on. Rebecca was also on this trip. She used words to the effect:
- "Rebecca went into the shower and [BZF] was in her room. Grant went into [BZF]'s room and something happened".*

and

"As soon as Rebecca came out of the shower, Grant ran out of [BZF]'s room and [BZF] was on the floor crying and called me in tears".

28. [BZH] did not tell me what happened in Rebecca's room. She may have used the word 'massage', although I do not recall the exact words, however the way [BZH] explained it to me there was definite contact between Grant Davies and [BZF].

29. Approximately two (2) weeks later, I received a phone call from [BZH]. She sounded distressed and she was crying. She said words to the effect:

"My husband (i.e. [BZE]) found text messages on my daughter's (i.e. [BZG]) phone from Grant (i.e. Grant Davies)".

30. While she was crying I picked up a pencil and a scrap piece of cardboard from my daughter's Nasonex Nasal Spray box and took some notes in point form. These notes read:

"Send me a pic" (i.e. a text which [BZH] read on [BZG]'s phone from Grant Davies in respect of sending a photo of herself to Grant);

"What are you wearing" (i.e. a text which [BZH] read on [BZG]'s phone from Grant Davies);

"Are you home alone" (i.e. a text which [BZH] read on [BZG]'s phone from Grant Davies);

"Ashamed" (i.e. [BZH] was telling me that she felt very ashamed and she was too ashamed to continue telling me the remainder of the text messages).

"sending naked photos of his willy" (i.e. [BZH] expressed that she was relieved that her husband did not see the naked photos of Grant Davies on [BZG]'s phone because her other daughter [BZF] had deleted them);

"clean Thursday" (i.e. [BZH] told me that she was cleaning Grant Davies house on regular (being weekly or fortnightly) basis and that Grant gave her daughter [BZG] a private lesson in the RG Dance Studio during this time).

31. In response to these comments and [BZH]'s distress, I said words to the effect:

"[BZH], did you keep these photos?"; and

"Did you keep these texts as evidence?",

She replied:

"No, I deleted them",

and I replied:

"Why would you delete them?"

She did not provide me an answer.

32. I then said to [BZH] words to the effect:
"If you don't feel strong enough, I'll have a meeting at RG and take the kids out of RG".
 [BZH] then said:
"I want to say more, but I'm too ashamed".
33. I had no understanding of what she meant by her comment above. At the conclusion of the call, I was both confused and concerned. I spoke to my husband who was in the house during the call. I told him that [BZH] called me and said her husband was very angry about texts he found on his daughter's phone, and asked him what I should do. He said to me words to the effect:
"Was this just what [BZH] is telling you – this is only hearsay – you have to be careful about defaming people".
34. Approximately two (2) hours later, I called [BZH] and said words to the effect:
"Are you ready to do something about this? If you are not strong enough I am and I will do it with you or for you".
35. [BZH] was no longer distressed. She said to me words to the effect:
"It was nothing – it was an over-reaction – my over-reacting husband", and
"They were only photos".
36. I replied in words to the effect:
"[BZH], they're his children, he's a concerned father who has a right to worry"
37. She continued to assure me that it was an overreaction and said words to the effect:
"They're only texts – I don't know why [BZE] (i.e. her husband) is so upset, he's going over the top".
38. I replied in words to the effect:
"[BZH], if what you said before is true, he (i.e. Grant Davies) could go to gaol for it".
39. She continued to tell me that it wasn't as bad as she had made it out to be in the previous call, repeating her comments as in paragraphs 35 and 37, and then concluded this call. She said words to the effect:
"He's overreacting, it's not as bad as he (i.e. [BZE]) made it out to be – there is nothing to be worried about".
40. As result of this comment, I thought there must have been a misunderstanding and believed the things I had written down did not actually occur. Given my husband had told me about the dangers of defaming people, I became doubtful of and questioned the reliability of what [BZH] had told me in the phone call described in paragraphs 27 to 30.

41. I was not shown or sent any photos or text messages from [BZH]. Nor have I been shown or sent any photos or text messages from any other parent, student, child or dance colleague that suggested sexual or inappropriate conduct. As [BZH] appeared to be dropping what she had told me I did not believe that what she had told me was reliable. I found her attitude very confusing.
42. On July 19 2013, Detective Senior Constable, Gregory Camilleri took a photo of the notes I had taken in respect of my Statement, dated that same day.
43. A short time after these telephone conversations, [BZH] continued posting status updates on Facebook praising RG Dance or commenting on Grant Davies' posts, saying in words to the effect:
- "Thanks for the experience for my girls";*
- "The girls had a fabulous time";* and
- "Thank you for all that RG Dance has done for the girls".*
44. These comments added to my confusion and doubts as to what she had told me.
45. The third and final conversation I had with [BZH] was outside RG Dance Studio, in or around the end of December 2012. [BZH] approached me and said that she had never seen her daughter, [BZF] so upset. She said to me, words to the effect:
- "Both my daughters went away with Grant to a workshop, it was four hours drive away".*
- I responded in words to the effect:
- "It's good that the girls were together in the car".*
46. [BZH] shook her head and said to me, words to the effect:
- "Well, he made [BZF] sit in the front and [BZG] in the back. And when they got back home, [BZF] was hysterical, slammed the door and yelled 'why do you make us go with him'".*
- I was concerned for [BZG] and [BZF] and said words to the effect:
- "If they're that unhappy - get them out";* and
- "I'll help you find another school".*
47. [BZH] said words to the effect:
- "No, its okay".*
- and the conversation concluded.
48. In my NSW Police - Statement of a Witness (i.e. "Police Statement"), dated 19 July 2013 it is written in paragraph 20:

"She then was saying that Grant exposed himself only to BZF, I took this as Grant exposed his penis to her, and either that he touched her or she touched him but I don't know where but at the time I could only imagine".

49. I do not recall the exact wording of the conversation with the Police officer, at the time that he was taking down my Statement. I recall upon receiving a copy of the Police Statement, that I contacted Police Officer Aaron Power to tell him that the Police Statement did not accurately portray my version of events. He advised me to send through my amendments to him via email, which I proceeded to do, in order to rectify the error in my Police Statement.
50. I no longer have a copy of that email that was sent. I did not receive a response or new Police Statement rectifying the error to review or sign from the Police. However, I did receive an email in or around August 2014, from Aaron Power advising that Grant Davies had pleaded guilty and I would no longer be required as a witness.
51. In or about early December 2012, I discovered that BZH, her daughters, BZF and BZG had gone on a holiday to the United States of America with Grant Davies, Rebecca Davies and Alison (i.e. Rebecca's partner at the time). This seemed odd to me given the various comments she had made to me as described in paragraphs 27 to 30 and 46. They posted photos of this holiday on Facebook.
52. I have never seen BZF or BZG upset or aggravated in the time that I was involved with RG Dance.
53. In or around December 2012 I received an offer to work at 'Village on Broadway' dance school located at 85 O'Riordan Street, Alexandria. This was a very good offer and very good performing arts school, which included two (2) scholarships for my daughters and I decided to take it and enrol my daughters into 'Village on Broadway'.
54. On or around 20 January 2013 I had a teleconference with Grant Davies, Rebecca Davies, Jennifer Davies in order that I could advise them of my decision to leave RG Dance and take up the new job offer and withdraw my daughters from the school due to the new job offer. I said to them words to the effect:
- "I have been offered an amazing job by Jackie Howard of Village on Broadway and the girls have been offered scholarships to the school";*
- and towards the end of the conversation, I said words to the effect:
- "There are things that I've been hearing – I thought you should know about it".*
55. Before I was able to explain, Grant Davies cut me off and said very loudly, words to the effect:
- "Are you calling me a pedophile?";*
- and
- "Everyone is just out to get us (i.e. RG Dance) – it's the tall poppy syndrome".*
- The teleconference was then terminated.

56. In or about January 2013, I had a telephone conversation with Sarah Jane McKinnon, a colleague at RG Dance. I said to her, words to the effect:

"I am leaving RG Dance",

"Something is going on with [BZH] but I can't be sure about it.";

Sarah Jane McKinnon then said words to the effect:

"I've heard some things about Grant (i.e. Grant Davies)",

which prompted me to say words to the effect:

"[BZH] said that they went on a trip and [BZF] was on the floor crying and calling her (i.e. [BZH])";

"[BZH] said that her husband found text messages on [BZG]'s phone and got really angry about it";

and

"Please keep an eye out on the girls for me – I'm not sure what's going on".

57. Within a week after this conversation with Sarah Jane McKinnon, I came across a Facebook status post, it read in words to the effect:

"Back off – stay away".

This was shortly after some comments I made on a mutual friend's Facebook wall.

58. I engaged in a private Facebook conversation with Sarah Jane to ask if this Facebook post was directed at me. She replied in words to the effect:

"Yes it was, I spoke to [BZH] who said she never said any of those things to you and that you were lying and making up all those stories"; and

"You have left RG Dance, leave us alone!"

59. My contact and interaction with Grant Davies was limited and minimal. He taught the older classes and I rarely had need to go and see him in his office. I did not socialize with Grant Davies other than at the end of year functions. However, he did edit my music at a maximum of twice a year.
60. I had greater contact with Jennifer Davies who taught similar aged students as myself, being, those students aged between two (2) years old to about six (6) years old.
61. At the time I was working at RG Dance I had not understanding of the working with children checks. My first understanding that I required a 'Working with Children' check was a year or two into my employment with Village on Broadway that I was instructed to obtain a 'Working with Children' check.
62. Throughout my career as a dance teacher at either RG Dance or any other Dance Studio or an individual with the Dance community, I have had no knowledge or understanding of the reporting disclosures, complaints or allegations of child abuse to

NSW FACS or the Child Protection Helpline or any other persons. These requirements were never brought to my attention, or were they a condition of my employment in the dance school industry, until it was first raised as mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

Date: 16 February 2016



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Signed by Diana Dimos