



Royal Commission  
into Institutional Responses  
to Child Sexual Abuse

Statement

**Name** CAA  
**Address** Known to Royal Commission.  
**Occupation** Known to Royal Commission  
**Date** 21 March 2017

1. This statement made by me accurately sets out the evidence that I am prepared to give to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The statement is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
2. My full name is CAA and I am 28 years old. I have previously been involved with the Royal Commission and am a survivor of child sexual abuse.
3. I have been asked to describe my experience of grooming and entrapment. The first thing I'd say is that the early stages of sexual abuse don't feel like grooming or entrapment, primarily because as a young person I lacked the vocabulary to describe what was happening in those terms. It's also true that I lacked the kind of social and moral understanding necessary to make definitive judgements about what was happening to me. That was part of the success of the grooming I experienced. It was bound up with the fact that I wasn't able to say that it was grooming. Related to this was an ambiguity surrounding the difference between not liking something and thinking that thing is morally wrong. Not having a more robust moral vocabulary at a young age made it sometimes difficult to tell when a reaction of disgust (for example) was a manifestation of moral outrage or just a strong dislike of whatever was happening to me. 'Not liking something' didn't seem like a very good reason for objecting to it.
4. This was coupled with the fact that during the period of abuse, the perpetrator kept telling me that what was happening was good for me and necessary to my development as a person. This played into the (otherwise often valid) notion taught to children that sometimes we have to do things (or put up with things) we don't like in order to reap greater rewards or benefits in the

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**Statement in the matter of Case Study 57 - Nature, Cause and Impact**  
Statement of CAA

Page 2 of 3

future. It also played into the (otherwise often valid) notion that 'the good' is not always 'the easy' or 'the comfortable'.

5. In my own case at least, the grooming and entrapment were very much a process of throwing me headlong into these kinds of moral grey areas (or, showing me that the notions above were capable of being interpreted in such a way as would justify or legitimise sexual activity between adults and minors).
6. Another aspect of the grooming was the way in which the perpetrator used notions of authority and experience to support his claims about the legitimacy of the abuse and why, 'properly speaking', it was not abuse but rather a form of love. Again, this was a matter of using the respect and love I already had for him (these were cultivated in the years leading up to the abuse) as a way to engender trust, and this made it a lot easier for the perpetrator to begin sexually abusing me without eliciting more stringent opposition on my part.
7. This trust was also a key factor in subduing (or overriding) the confusion I felt about what was happening to me. There was a general feeling of 'this is all happening for a reason which is probably unclear to me, but it will all work out for the best in the end because [the perpetrator] knows what he's doing'. None of this would have been possible without the sense of trust and ongoing respect cultivated by the perpetrator. I think much was made of the idea that if the perpetrator was an expert in one field, then he must be an expert in all fields, including sex and personal development. Such notions seem obviously irrational to me now, but at a young age it is not so easy to see this.
8. A salient feature of my experience was perhaps a common one in that I didn't feel as if I could speak to anyone about the abuse. Whether it be family, friends, or people in positions of authority at the institutions on whose premises some of the abuse occurred. This was not only a function of the fact that abuse was an uncomfortable topic to bring up, but also because the kind of confusion I felt regarding the abuse was already prohibitive in that respect. There was also a sense in which the trust and respect I had for the perpetrator naturally engendered the idea that talking about the abuse would constitute a kind of betrayal, both of the perpetrator himself and also the relationship we had.

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**Statement in the matter of Case Study 57 - Nature, Cause and Impact**  
Statement of CAA

Page 3 of 3

9. Given that success in the field of endeavour in which I was engaged at the time was presented by the perpetrator as conditional on this kind of relationship continuing unabated, there was always more of an incentive not to say anything than there was to say something. Again, the confusion occasioned by my lack of moral vocabulary to characterise my situation clearly rendered disclosure of the abuse almost impossible. When I did eventually tell my parents it was on the back of new information, that other people I knew had been abused. One of the truly unfortunate aspects of the secretive relationship the perpetrator formed with me was the idea that the relationship was 'special', and therefore by implication, unique. This is, in my view, one of the most jarring features of the phenomenon of sexual abuse - that it is so widespread and at the same time so unknown. People know 'about' sexual abuse, yet we are often still surprised when particular individuals come out and tell of their abuse. This makes it very difficult for victims to start to form communities of shared experience and help others to find opportunities to disclose their abuse if they wish to.
10. In this sense, sexual abuse remains an intensely private experience, and part of the stigma associated with talking about this kind of abuse is bound up with the fact that it relates to what we often regard as the most personal (and hence also the most vulnerable) aspect of our lives. I was certainly not aware of any kind of support mechanism for victims of sexual abuse, and the general impression I had about public treatment of sexual abuse was that it was a matter settled in the courts. So in this sense it was alien to my own experience at the time, and this made it even more difficult to talk about it to anyone. Accessibility to opportunities to speak about my abuse was severely limited, and so the issues surrounding my continuing inability to disclose the abuse were not just a matter of finding it difficult to avail myself of whatever opportunities were available to me at the time for doing so, but also a matter of finding those opportunities in the first place. REDACTED

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21 March 2017

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