

THQ MEMO

TO: Commissioner Norman Howe
Colonel Verna Skinner
Lt-Colonel Edward Schmidtke
Major Garth McKenzie
Major Margaret Armstrong
Graham Sapwell

FROM: John Dalziel
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

DATE: March 3, 1997

RE: ALLAN SMITH TRIAL

I visited Perth on Thursday 27th February to attend the trial of Charles Allan Smith, he appeared in court where he pleaded guilty to 74 charges arising from the years 1954 to 1976, against 23 victims. Three of the original charges were amended all of them to more serious charges as a result of interviews conducted by the police in the last two weeks. He will appear in court where submissions will be made regarding his sentencing on Friday 4th April, following what the magistrate called the 'fast track system'.

Also present in court was Major Merilyn McKenzie and Captain John Simmonds. There were numerous family members of victims present in court and four of the victims. The two policemen responsible for the charges were also there and I gave them thirty copies of our Sexual Abuse leaflet to distribute to victims that were not present in court. They indicated that they would be very glad to do so.

After the court appearance Major Merilyn McKenzie met with a number of the victims and we distributed the Sexual Abuse leaflet to them and their family members.

MEDIA COVERAGE

On leaving the court I conducted an interview on the pavement with Channel 10 news and ABC television news and ABC radio news. The major thrust of their comments was that Allan Smith had been charged by police with serious sexual offences against boys in 1974 and given a good two year good behaviour bond. Why in the light of these charges was he allowed to be re-admitted as a Salvation Army officer.

Further victims were present in court who alleged that while at Kellerberrin in 1958 before he became an officer, he was counselled by The Salvation Army corps officer because he had committed sexual offences against boys. They asked why did we allow him to become a Salvation Army officer in 1961.

We viewed the television news that evening and the reports stuck to the facts. The statements I made about us feeling a sense of betrayal and that we were now offering to help in any way we could victims of these crimes were also aired. In the circumstances the coverage was responsible. I also attended the ABC studios where I gave a 20 minute television interview for their Stateline program with, Mr Peter Kennedy this went to air on Friday evening 28th February 6 pm and again on Saturday 12 noon, in Western Australia only.

I gave a short news grab for 6PR and appeared on 6PR's drive time radio program (6PR is the equivalent of 3AW in Perth). This interview and the ABC radio interview were used by 5DN Adelaide, 6WF Perth, 3LO Melbourne, ABC National Radio, PM programs, States radio news.

POLICE INTERVIEW

Throughout the day I had a number of conversations with Detective Phil O'Reilly from the West Australian Police from him I verified the statement the media were making about the charges. I also discussed with him the accusation that The Salvation Army harboured Allan Smith in Launceston and as I thought it had originated from him. I questioned him about his evidence and he admitted that it was questionable but that he thought that the person who had harbored Allan Smith had had Salvation Army associations in the past. I pointed out that this hardly justified the phrase that The Salvation Army was harboring him in Tasmania and while he agreed he then pointed out to me that two Salvationists had been present in court when he first appeared in Launceston. How could they have known about it if there had not been some collusion with The Salvation Army. I then told him about the Sunday evening phone call that I had received from the Territorial Commander of the Army who in turn had got information from the Divisional Commander in Tasmania Major Ian Hamilton following a call from the Police Assistant Commissioner. He was surprised that we had been given this information by the police.

He also told me that his superior had refused to let us have details of the victims and the charges laid against them, on the grounds that the magistrate had instructed that those details be suppressed. I would recommend that we approach the magistrate and ask if a confidential copy of this can be given for the eyes of the Divisional Commander in Perth and the Personnel Department in Melbourne only.

MEETING AT DHQ

A meeting with the Major Garth McKenzie (Divisional Commander), Major Marilyn McKenzie, Major Laurie Venables, Major Helen Newman, Captain John Simmonds and Major Robert McDonald took place to discuss the way in which The Salvation Army in Western Australia will deal with families coming forward for help (Colonel Joyce Fischer was unable to attend the meeting). I passed on the extensive notes that we have received from the Roman Catholic church on dealing with victims. We discussed the importance of being available for the survivors so that they

could be put in contact with good advice, counselling of all kinds and where necessary other justice and legal aid. I assured them that we would soon have in place procedures for mediation and a competent group of people that could give them advise on the spot on how to deal with survivors and their families.

Two suggestions were made regarding the leaflet. The first was that under the definition of what the Pastoral Response Unit will do that point three be expanded so that it will now read, "provided with options, information, resources and referral to independent psychologists and counsellors". On the back page a non-Salvation Army person be added to those that can be contacted if people require assistance. I would suggest that this person could be one of the counsellors that is appointed to assist The Salvation Army in Western Australia.

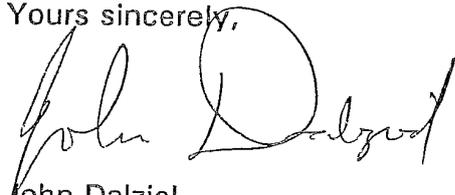
I would like us as early as possible next week to pull together a group of experts at THQ to act as an advisory commission for this West Australian Pastoral Response Unit and I would suggest that Lt-Colonel Beryl Golding should be part of this group, also Graham Sapwell, Helen Last and any other expert that Beryl would recommend and from a Public Relations point of view myself.

LEGAL ARGUMENT

During the course of my 6PR interview the interviewer mentioned that the survivors were talking of taking a class action against The Salvation Army.

During the course of one of the conversations I had with the police they mentioned that the Defence Lawyers for Allan Smith were going to use as a mitigating circumstance in their arguments on April 4th the fact that The Salvation Army knew of this paedophile activities and in employing him condoned or at least understood his activities. He therefore would argued that The Salvation Army were the ones to blame and not him. I am quite sure that argument will not be accepted but it obviously will be of damage to The Salvation Army that its made. Instead of reiterating the arguments I have used to support The Salvation Army's handling of the Allan Smith matter I suggest that we look at the video tape of the Stateline program in which you will see the arguments I have used to talk about the evolution of our treatment of sex offenders, the subject of forgiveness and responsibility and the way we handle such matters today.

Yours sincerely,



John Dalziel
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

JD/ac