

Statutory Declaration
OATHS ACT 1900, NSW, EIGHTH SCHEDULE

I, Al, do solemnly and sincerely declare that:

1. I am the victim of James Fletcher whose abuse of me was the subject of the criminal trial in 2004 where Fletcher was convicted on all charges;
2. I don't want to talk about the abuse which was dreadful and has had a very significant impact on my life and that of my family. It is documented in court records and my statement describes the events and the level of abuse I endured for years. My mother's book describes the effect on my life and I would like to submit some further chapters from then to the present;
3. I found it very hard to go to the police about the abuse. I had tried to block it out but there were many times I was tormented by memories and the shame, anger and embarrassment which had a really bad effect on me. I was alright if I could forget about it for a while but there were always reminders. I actually thought I was just stuffing up my life until I realised I was a typical victim;
4. On the first Sunday in June, 2002, I had a meeting with mum and dad at lunchtime and told them I wanted to go to the police as I realised I wasn't getting any better in managing the abuse myself. A friend said he would arrange a meeting with a good policeman who turned out to be Peter Fox. That night, I watched George Pell on TV talking to some parents of clergy sexual abuse victims and I identified some of their behaviour with mine. I got very upset and I actually rang Father Jim that night and gave him a blast;
5. I thought I could just go to the police and tell them everything and then move on but I had no idea it would be so hard to get the words out;
6. Detective Peter Fox is a man of integrity who was very compassionate to me and let me take my time to get it out. I think I had a break over the Christmas when my little son was born but it did take about 11 months all up and I was very stressed and suffered from depression;
7. What has really made my journey more difficult has been the recent exposure in the media which I have encouraged so that a full scale investigation can be played out and the right people be made accountable for how abuse has been handled or covered up;
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9. I knew Fletcher was telling people about all of my troubles in the past and much was made of my alcohol related incidents. Years later I learned that on the night of my suicide attempt in the shed at Glen Oak, he had told some friends who were visiting about it. I guess he just built on that;

 

10. When I was out with my partner, her children and our baby, I was very anxious as I didn't know who knew about the abuse and my allegations. If people looked at me for longer than a second, I became upset as I assumed they were aware. In shopping centres, at preschools, at sporting events and at work, people seemed to be in a hurry or busy if I just tried to have an ordinary conversation with them;
11. I knew Fletcher was getting support and preparing himself and if there was going to be an arrest I think it was so unfair he was tipped off. It probably made Peter Fox's job a lot harder as people closed ranks. I know mum and dad were dropped by church people but not their friends and our family;
12. During the trial, I had strong support from family and friends but no clergy at all. I didn't want them by then anyway as they hadn't been near us. We saw clergy visiting Fletcher at court and of course his supporters who didn't want to look at us. After it was over, Bishop Malone rang dad and asked to speak to me. I took the phone and he told me Fletcher would never work in the diocese again but asked me to keep the faith. I still wonder what "faith" he was talking about;
13. Since the court trial I did, I guess, what only AH could do. I picked myself up and attempted to move on in life. I separated from my partner a few years after the Trial. I continued to work in my small business and met my current partner and have had two more children. We have separated several times and I lost my business due to many factors involved with the abuse and now work in an office environment in the finance industry;
14. Over the last 6 months in particular I have had flowers delivered to work from strangers, people walking in off the street and congratulating me, other completely random people divulging abuse that they have endured from the Church, schools or family members. This I guess is a great reflection on what is going on at the moment but no one understands that even now the memories are vivid and I am watching my life played out again in an environment which each day is uncovering the truths about the Catholic Church and its cover-ups;
15. This is exactly what needed to happen but you do ask the question: "if they had done something about Fletcher years ago instead of moving him around would he have got to me? How would my life be different? Would I have continued on with my cricket and be playing in the ashes this year? Would I have gone to Uni and completed a degree? Would I have had a better or different relationship with my partner?" These are the questions I ask myself and these are the opportunities that have been taken away from me as a result of the abuse and the church's failure to handle a priest who was on their radar;
16. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Peter Fox, my Mother and Father and brothers. Thank you to the Commission but most of all thank you to my partner and kids for keeping it real and showing me the way to move forward. This is very challenging as I feel that I have lost a part of my life that I cannot reclaim and am so many years behind everyone else due to the abuse;
17. I have relocated back to _____ to get out of this area again as the memories are too much and the bastardisation from some elements of the community is very much alive and kicking;



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18. The breach of trust I have experienced at the hands of the catholic church will affect me forever as I was an innocent little kid with a big hope for the future. The priest, James Fletcher, did a terrible job on me but I expected that when I finally got the courage to tell someone about it, the church would not let me down and they would do the right thing. That wasn't to be and I believe they put more effort into damage control than into caring for me;

and I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of the Oaths Act 1900.

Declared at: Magistrates Court On 26th June 2013
[place] [date]
[signature of declarant]

In the presence of an authorised witness, who states:

I, Elisa Lewis a Commissioner of Declarations
[name of authorised witness] [qualification of authorised witness]

certify the following matters concerning the making of this statutory declaration by the person who made it: [*please cross out any text that does not apply]

- ~~*I saw the face of the person OR *I did not see the face of the person because the person was wearing a face covering, but I am satisfied that the person had a special justification for not removing the covering; and~~
- ~~*I have known the person for at least 12 months OR *I have confirmed the person's identity using an identification document and the document I relied on was~~
Driver Licence 557 2565
[describe identification document relied on]

[Signature]
[signature of authorised witness]

26/6/13
[date]

