FACT has moved on page 5

In Remembrance:
Roy Catchpole, p. 25
Barbara Hewson, p. 29
Paddy Rossmore, p. 33
Shirley Williams, p. 34

False Accusation Day
page 34

Announcing a New Academic Report

Robbed of Everything:
The Voices of Former Prisoners Maintaining Innocence though Convicted of Sexual Offences, and of their Relatives.
A new Academic Report by
Rosalie Burnett & Naomi-Ellen Speechley
and published by FACT - page 1
FACTion (Information, opinion and news from FACT), published twice a year, is freely available to online readers. Paper copies are available to order for which we suggest a donation towards printing & postage of around £12.00 per annum. Copies are available free-of-charge to those who are unable to give a donation. Please contact the Coordinator to order a copy.

We welcome enquiries from any member of the public interested in and supportive of FACT’s work, including academics, lawyers, politicians, journalists, students and any involved in the care of children and vulnerable adults, in either a professional or voluntary capacity.

We invite articles, letters, poetry, cartoons, photos, obituaries, etc. for publication. Items must be copyright-free or have the owner’s written permission to publish. Submissions are included at the sole discretion of the Editor. Copyright remains the property of the author(s). Contact details must be provided but names may be changed upon request. Articles published in FACTion do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of the Editor or of FACT as an organisation. Detailed ‘Guidelines for Contributors’ available from the Editor.

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FACT Coordinator & General enquiries: 0844 3510126 (check call charges with your provider. The coordinator will call you back if you leave a brief message.)

Confidential FACT Help Line 0843 289 2016

Whilst we are unable to give legal advice we do give support to those we believe are victims of unfounded allegations of abuse, charges and/or convictions, or those found innocent but suffering problems resulting from any associated public hysteria & rumour. We also give support to family members and friends.

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Contents

1. Robbed of Everything: The Voices of Former Prisoners maintaining Innocence though Convicted of Sexual Offences, and their Relatives.
   A Research report by Rosalie Burnett & Naomi-Ellen Speechley

5. FACT has moved on

6. Thank You: Gratitude to FACT, by Brian Hudson

6. How You Can Support FACT

7. The Forthcoming FACT AGM & Conference - details

8. Corruption & Truth by Jeremy Dunning-Davies

13. New Website: Blackstone's Drum

13. A Lesser Tragedy (Extracts) by Peter Joyce

16. Guilty, even though proved innocent by a FACT member

19 Coping Strategies Website Views pass 10,000

20. What Will Our Scar Tell? - a poem by AC

21. From Our Archives: FACTion front page in February 2010

22. An Open Letter to Priti Patel

24. Police Chief’s Harassment Pledge is a Travesty of Justice

25. In Memory of Rev Roy Catchpole


33. Remembering Remembering Paddy Rossmore, 1931 - 2021 by Ros Burnett

34. FAD: False Accusation Day 9th September 2021

34. In Remembrance: Dame Shirley Williams 1930 - 2021

34. Wills and Inheritance: advice available

36. A Personal View Point: Food for Thought by Sean Parker

36. Twitter: a source of help

37. Book Review: In Black & White by Alexandra Wilson

38. Book Review: A Summary of the English Legal System by Easyjail

Forthcoming Events & Committee Meetings

9th September: Falsely Accused Day

9th October 2021, FACT AGM & Conference * - see page 7

20th November 2021, National Committee Meeting (via the internet)
We were delighted earlier this year to launch the report ‘Robbed of Everything’¹. The research for this work carried out by Dr Ros Burnett (Research Associate at the University of Oxford Centre for Criminology) and Dr Naomi-Ellen Speechley (Criminal Justice University of Manchester). Both have research experience and previous publications in the subject area of miscarriages of justice and false allegations.

This study has encapsulated the utter devastation which is caused in a person’s life as a result of an accusation.

This publication is about the plight of those maintaining innocence following a criminal sexual abuse conviction. Following discussion of the cultural and policy context in which wrongful convictions can occur, the report draws on detailed accounts to provide examples of the real life trauma that results from their harrowing experiences.

This study has encapsulated the utter devastation which is caused in a person’s life as a result of an accusation and it is a ‘must read’ for all those caught up in this area of the criminal justice system whose lives or work bring them into contact with people maintaining innocence but facing conviction based only on verbal testimony. This publication complements and is a follow on to the previous research report ‘The Impact of being Wrongly Accused of Abuse in Occupations of Trust’² which gives first-hand accounts of the experiences suffered by those falsely accused and acquitted of any wrongdoing.

‘Your self-confidence just goes straight away, because you’ve gone overnight from one planet to another. You’ve changed worlds. You’ve gone from a situation where you are well established in a senior position in a respected profession and overnight that’s all gone. You are suddenly plunged from being important…to being nothing.

At first – the first period of time, a few days, a couple of weeks – you can’t believe that it has happened. You still believe that justice is there and that it is going to change. So you are in this state of mind at the beginning where you are thinking, ‘this is all a huge mistake, it’s only a matter of days and I’m going to be released and we’ll get back to normal’. Then, as each day went by I started to realise that wasn’t the case...

At first there was hope, and then after a while you realise there isn’t, and that everything has gone, and that your whole life has been destroyed. And then you start to realise the extent of that destruction…. and realise that it isn’t just what is in front of you then, it is going to be the rest of your life moving on.’

Graham
Robbed of Everything, page 18

This second publication reveals the worst case scenario that can and does result from a false accusation. It is truly catastrophic for the wrongly accused person and their families and partners, damaging all aspects of their lives, and causing much suffering. The accounts in this report provide many examples of the harm done. The discussion sections of the report clearly show why it is absolutely vital that the justice system implements new policies and laws to deal with claims of wrongful conviction in such cases.

Those convicted of an abuse offence suffer the worse form of punishment that could ever be given out. It ruins them as a person, it ruins the remainder of their lives and for some it is a death sentence. It is vital to recognise that there needs to be 100% surety in any conviction of abuse and the courts must make certain without a fragment of doubt that the accused is guilty. This does not happen and for many whose face trial majority verdicts and lurking doubt exist throughout and after. This is not good enough, particularly as the consequences are far reaching and harder to bear than any other form of sentence other than capital punishment.

The Blackstone principle:
Better 20 guilty persons go free than one innocent person is wrongly convicted

The mental torture with momentous physical and psychological outcomes demands certainty but this is not what the system delivers. Far too many people are now living in a dilapidated condition as a result of a false allegation and this happens irrespective of an acquittal or appeal. It was once said in times gone by that it is better for 20 guilty persons go free than one innocent person be wrongly convicted. It is known as the Blackstone principle and came into being in the eighteenth century and was adopted into British and American Law.

It was not the first time that this principle was recommended. As long ago as the Salem Witch Trials in the 1690’s the Reverend Increase Mather argued that ‘it would be better that ten witches should go free than the blood of a single innocent be shed’.² The presumption of innocence has in fact been the cornerstone and fundamental principle of English Law, that is until recent times. In abuse cases it is down to the accused to prove that they

‘[I was] a team manager in the social services, and when we moved to [city] the [county] police service were far more interested in me than in Vincent. So the fact that we are partners meant that I was suspended, disciplined, all my work was checked. There was no fault found in my work, but the letter reads that because of my personal choice in a relationship I made, I can't have a job… If I was going to have impaired judgment as a social worker, because I know someone with a conviction, I'm sure the impaired judgment would have shown itself... I had worked for them for 32 years… I was good at my job, I'd learnt a few skills. I've been trained inside out over more than three decades in social work. All of that now is wasted because I can't do it anymore, I'm banned for no reason.’

(Irene)

Robbed of Everything, page 17
are innocent whilst the accuser with the support of the police, CPS and solicitors simply has to make a complaint without witnesses or other forms of evidence.

The policy of the police today is to believe the accuser and name them as the victim on the sole basis of their word.

The policy of the police today is to believe the accuser and name them as the victim on the sole basis of their word irrespective of how flagrant and improbable it sounds. This of course is the reverse of normal policing and court proceedings where a high level of evidence was required prior to any allegation being taken to trial. It seems the bar for prosecution has been lowered and the consequences of this have been more than destructive for many people. This lowering of evidential standards has particularly affected the elderly, many of whom have had non-recent allegations after a lifetime of service and self-giving; they suddenly have their twilight years interrupted by overzealous policing and flawed policing. For these people, who often steadfastly believe that we have an excellent justice system, there then follows a period of heartache and adversity as they slowly see the system they treasured, and felt had kept them safe, turn on them and destroy their lives.

Abuse is of course a much detested and serious matter and FACT has always abhorred the real cases of abuse which have had a large impact upon society. FACT does not deny this happens and it strongly supports prosecutions and accountability for such offenders. Such offences are utterly repellent. What we also abhor is those who seek to exploit the genuine cases for their own gain whatever that may be. There is ample evidence to show that many false allegations have been brought maliciously.

Reasons have been varied, from financial gain by compensation, mischievousness, to seek mitigation for criminal offences, revenge or simply false memory through therapeutic intervention and suggestion. This we know has been further encouraged by full scale media reporting and the quest of litigation solicitors offering tempting compensation pay-outs for anyone willing to give them a statement involving abuse from years gone by.

For those making a false allegation the process is simple and a host of support is available for them. Encouragement, understanding and positive outcomes for them are implemented by specialist police officers and whilst these are desirable practices for the genuinely abused these same practices are exploited by those making a false accusation. This is why we call for more balance and a return to a justice system which investigates each and every reported crime thoroughly and relies on more than someone’s testimony.

In some cases we know for certain that statements of abuse have been invented, dates, times and places may have made it impossible for the stated events to have happened. Identities may be incorrect or ulterior motives exposed as in the much publicised cases of Jemma Beale, Carl Beech, and of course the false rape allegation against Liam Allan. When flaws are not so apparent however prosecutions happen even when there is no corroboration. It is then that those accused are propelled into a situation where they have to prove innocence as opposed to the prosecution have compelling evidence of guilt.

Defence is expensive; many will rely upon limited legal aid, some will spend what they can, others have invested life savings. It could be argued that those with the greatest financial assets could have some hope of constructing an adequate defence.

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2 Mather also forcefully stated his distrust of spectral evidence (fantasies) to convict witches. For more information see: Increase Mather by Mathew Madden http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/people/i_mather.html.
The use of private investigators and top-class lawyers and barristers do not come cheap and it can be these financial costs which are unattainable for many will prevent justice being done. The prosecution on the other hand has every resource and finance at its fingertips. The same can be said for appeals against conviction. Once a wrongful verdict has been passed there is very little chance of a successful appeal. Evidence is not available for a non-event, plus costs for an appeal are even higher and the CCRC is not equipped to deal with the thousands of cases awaiting review.

It is a problem that many know only too well and that is why the process now needs radical change again. The pendulum has not only swung too far by using the ‘believe the victim’ policy but it has stuck there and continues to persecute the innocent who are caught up in the same net that is cast to catch the guilty. The research report ‘Robbed of Everything’ and its predecessor highlight the sheer and ongoing misery which blights people’s lives for evermore.

‘We were both fearful but determined to fight these false allegations.’

‘FACT was a lifeline throughout the ordeal and members were supportive throughout. Family were supportive but had less understanding of the situation’

Hannah
Robbed of Everything, page 26 and 49

FACT’s webpage on how to cope and strategies for dealing with a false accusation has now exceeded 10,000 hits in the last 12 months. This is phenomenal and reflects the urgent need and support required in the country. The ruination of family, careers and mental health is a more than a high price to pay and is why we now must demand that these cases without substantial evidence must cease and we have a return to the high standard required to prove guilt.

“I’ve spent my life savings to get an appeal, I’ve sold my house to get money to go further and I might get an appeal sometime this year, if luck’s on my side… but you’ve great difficulty in getting a barrister or solicitor to take it to court for you afterwards.’

Joshua

‘During the appeal process, quite large sums of money were needed for legal fees and members of the family and extended family rallied round and contributed to this. None of them had to be asked and we felt this said much about the esteem in which their father, brother, uncle, or friend was held. The community also helped by holding fundraising evenings. These were much appreciated, as there were so many expenses e.g. transcripts cost £6000, solicitor’s fees £2000+ each time. Arthur’s employer tried to get a share of his pension but luckily did not succeed.’

Lyn and Marie
Robbed of Everything, page 12

Robbed of Everything can be downloaded from FACT’s website: factuk.org
A hard copy can be ordered from the Coordinator with a recommended donation of £5 to help cover the printing costs and postage.
On the 28th February this year FACT officially transferred to being a non-profit company ‘Supporting Victims of Unfounded Allegations of Abuse Ltd’. There are currently four company directors who also sit on the governing committee (known as the National committee). The organisation will still be known as FACT and will operate on much the same basis as before. We have comprehensive Articles of Association which have replaced our former Constitution. The Directors can be changed by the members who may vote to elect a director or a member of the governing committee at the AGM.

The former secretary post has now become the Operations and Support Coordinator (Coordinator for short) for which a small annual salary has been put in place. All transfer work has been overseen and directed by an expert solicitor who has also approved all Articles of Association ensuring that these are legally correct and suit the aims and objectives of our organisation.

Despite a second application to the Charity Commission they continue to refuse admission, their exact wording being ‘From what we can see a strong element of its work is in campaigning and lobbying. This suggests that the organisation has, at least in part, a political purpose, and therefore cannot be a charity’.

Whilst we do not agree, it does appear that they are adamant that we shall not be admitted and could be because we appear to be opposed to aspects government policy policy for civil and criminal justice. We have therefore settled on being a company limited by guarantee, because as a Non-Profit Limited Company, we can employ people, apply for funding, and make grant applications to support the work of this neglected cause.
THANK YOU

We are grateful to those over the last year who have taken the trouble to express their personal gratitude to FACT. Although most of these expressions of thanks land on my doorstep they are for the whole team who have been willing and strong enough to keep FACT going for many years. We do, from time to time, have attacks upon us and do need to know that we are needed and appreciated especially when things are not always going well. The FACT committee are a compassionate and dedicated group and should receive a accolade for their volunteer work. Below are just a very few of the sentiments expressed this year.

Brian Hudson
Coordinator

I am grateful to you and all FACT members for all the work you do to ensure that people like me are not forgotten.

Thank you for you priceless support over the last few years. The Christmas cards are very welcome and are a visible manifestation of encouragement.

Thank you so much for FACTion which highlights the plight of all us falsely accused. It is a comfort to know out there is a group of people still fighting and caring for justice.

No one could understand better what it has meant to share with those who understand.

FACT has been a life saver to me. No one could understand better what it has meant to share with those who understand.

There is no way I could have got through this without FACT. You will never fully know just how much it has meant to be believed.

I thank FACT for the understanding and support that I have received. It is so valuable to have this.

Thank you to FACT who stood by me throughout my ordeal I do not how I would have got through without this support and encouragement.

How You Can Support FACT

FACT is run by volunteers and is funded through its membership fees and by donations.

Make a Donation

If you wish to make a donation, see our donation web page: https://factuk.org/about-us/join-us/donate/

Volunteer

We need skills and experience across a broad range of areas to help us continue the good work. If you can help, please contact Brian Hudson. Contact details are on the inside cover of this magazine.
FACT AGM & Conference

Theme: Managing the Impact of Wrongful Allegations of Abuse

Saturday 9th October 2021

Edgbaston Community Centre
4 Woodview Drive
Birmingham
B15 2HU

We are all looking forward very much to meeting everyone again.

Morning session
10 am  Arrival - drinks available
10.45am.  Annual General Meeting
Noon:  A light lunch will be served

Afternoon Session
12.45pm  Guest Speakers on the above theme:
4.00 pm  Close

Speakers
Matthew Scott.
Better known perhaps as “barristerblogger”. He is one of the country’s better known legal bloggers and runs the website www.barristerblogger.com
Matthew is a member of the Criminal Bar Association and the Criminal Appeal Lawyers Association.

Dr Diane Phimister.
Lead for Mental Health at Coventry University. Independent Mental Health Consultant.

IMPORTANT
You must register to attend and numbers may well be limited (depending upon any remaining COVID Restrictions).
The morning session places are limited as we do not have use of the full hall until lunch time.
Please register your attendance by emailing to support@factuk.org or in writing to FACT. 83 Ducie Street, Manchester. M1 2JQ.
Sunday May 2nd saw the final episode of series 6 of the BBC drama serial *Line of Duty*. The final episode left unanswered as many questions as it answered and possibly that indicates another series in the not-too-distant future. However, if that was the final episode, it still raises a number of questions which are immediately pertinent to readers of *FACTion* as well as to all truly interested in justice and the rule of real law.

Seemingly, the long hunted ‘fourth man’ was revealed but this reasonably senior police officer only admitted to being a channel through which information was passed. However, even if he was the most senior police officer involved in what we normally regard as corrupt practices, huge queries were left hanging over the bona fides of such characters as the Chief Constable and DCS Carmichael. If not corrupt in the usual sense of the word, both were intent on preventing the completion of a detailed investigation into institutional corruption and, in that sense they were arguably as culpable as the obviously ‘bent copper’. Both these characters had allowed their minds to be corrupted by reasons left unsaid but, obviously, the Chief Constable was intent on preserving his popular public persona above all else and it became clear he was surrounding himself by such as DCS Carmichael who would unswervingly help him maintain that image. Hence, in their obstructions against investigation, they were all as corrupt as the one revealed as the fourth man because their gross self-interest had protected that truly ‘bent copper’ and allowed heinous crimes, even murder, to be carried out with greatly reduced risk of answerability.

What has all this to do with *FACT* and the people it represents? The very real and, indeed, obvious link is that so much of the trouble involving miscarriages of justice – whether people have been found guilty or innocent in court – is caused by people in positions of authority having their minds both corrupted and perverted. These people consistently put personal self-interest above all else, including the real law, (meaning the actual law as enshrined in statute rather than any personal interpretation of it). In fact, it might be thought the law as the man-in-the-street understands it is, for these people, something to be manipulated for their own ends.

This notion of people in positions of some sort of authority within the legal system, whether they be police, lawyers or even judges, being subject to having their minds corrupted unfortunately offers a possible explanation for at least some of the cases of miscarriage of justice occurring. Here, yet again, in a broad sense miscarriages of justice must include all those brought to face a jury trial but found not guilty, because they will have suffered enormous trauma even to the extent of being terrified and for many, the experience will remain with them for the rest of their lives. Some of the most obvious instances of the type of corruption of mind actually occur in situations encountered by many of those who *FACT* endeavours to help and protect.

In cases of accusations of sexual assault and even rape, investigating officers will, on occasions, have dealt with such cases before, many of which might have been genuine, but those experiences have left them seeing wrongdoing where none exists because their minds have been distorted by earlier happenings. Some, on the other

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1. Dictionary definitions of ‘corrupt’ suggest that dishonesty is an essential component. To be ‘corrupted by’ though might mean, ‘having practices distorted and minds prejudiced against or brainwashed towards...’. Therefore, those implicated lower down the professional chain might be acting with sincere good intent.
hand, might well be coming to the ends of their careers and see a situation as being their last ‘big case’. This too distorts the mind through pure self-interest and leads to a case being prejudged and there being no intelligent, open-minded investigation. Following any police investigation, flawed or otherwise, comes the intervention of the CPS which again should examine all the evidence, real or imagined, with a truly open mind. Many in this body though will have had their minds corrupted, possibly unknowingly, through external events. These external factors could include too much belief in all aspects of the ‘me-too’ movement or, especially as far as the CPS is concerned, by concerns being publicly raised by various Directors of Public Prosecution over the number of successful prosecutions for rape. Our society is rightly totally opposed to rape and wants proven rapists to be dealt with severely by the law, but they must be proven rapists and proven beyond reasonable doubt.

This means, though, that it should be virtually impossible to gain a conviction in the absence of convincing forensic evidence and that evidence must be accurate, unlike the situation highlighted in a new database introduced by the Laboratory for Evidence-Based Justice, based at Exeter Law School, under the direction of Dr Rebecca Helm. The database, created by the lab, includes the most comprehensive set of information to date about convictions overturned as a result of factual error in the UK, and covers cases in England and Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland, from 1970 to the present. Details of this project may be found at:


This is a document which might prove of extreme interest to any member of FACT. However, some of the more relevant details are as follows:

Of the more than 250 cases considered, 22% were concerned with sexual offences but of what specific type is not explained so it is not known if, for example, cases of accusations against teachers are included. Of the cases of proven miscarriage of justice, 21% were the result of false or misleading forensic science and, of these, 11% were in cases of sexual offence; 11% were the result of inadequate disclosure and, of these, 15% were concerned with sexual offences.

These figures alone raise huge questions about the running of our once prized justice system. As a scientist myself, although a theoretical one rather than an experimental one, I find the figure of false or misleading forensic science extremely difficult to accept as presumably being a result simply of human error; that is not, or should not be, the way of true science. As for the disclosure of information, what precisely is covered in this category? It seems to some that it’s almost standard practice for the prosecution to withhold information from the defence. In many cases when aware of the existence of this information this simply means the defence demands it on the opening day of the trial. This, in turn, results in a delay in any court proceedings and such delays no doubt place more financial burden on the taxpayer.

Again, with forensic science now being highlighted as a possible source of problems, the web covered by the notion of corrupt minds is widened immediately. One must wonder if, on occasions at least, people are seeking a result they wish to find. Many will believe that cannot happen in science. I cannot, in all honesty, comment on the situation in forensic science as it is an area of which I have no knowledge but, in areas of physical science, experimental and observational results are often interpreted to be in line with conventionally perceived wisdom. The above cited report certainly raises the question of whether, or not, a similar situation exists in forensic science. Further, this should raise very serious questions surrounding any cases of a sexual nature since, without utterly reliable forensic evidence, no such case should proceed to trial.

In the absence of reliable forensic evidence, there would be no evidence that any offence had actually occurred. This is, or should be, an extremely serious point, but one which seems to be ignored on occasions: for example, how do you charge someone with murder when there is no body or how do you charge someone with murder or manslaughter when the cause of death cannot be determined? Remember that, in the first example cited here, people have faked their own death to claim insurance and such has been paid out in the absence of a
body; it is only when the ‘dead’ person has reappeared somewhere that the truth has come out! These latter points become even more important when it is remembered that, as has been mentioned previously, the idea of replacing ‘beyond reasonable doubt’ in criminal trials with ‘on the balance of probabilities’ has still not been discounted by some—certainly no public withdrawal of the idea has appeared.. It might be remembered also that this suggestion is undoubtedly being driven by the lobby claiming this country has too few convictions for rape. This, in itself, should be no cause for debate; in any case, evidence should be collected and put before a jury to decide on guilt or innocence of the accused. Rape or sexual assault, unless witnessed by an unbiased third party, must be difficult to prove but forensic evidence, as pointed out earlier, should be a crucial part of the evidence in any such case, otherwise the evidence must be largely verbal testimony and, therefore, should be deemed inadmissible.

**Rape is an abominable crime and must be condemned by all. Equally, being wrongly convicted of rape is abominable**

This is not to lessen the importance of prosecuting people for rape. Rape is an abominable crime and must be condemned by all. Equally being wrongly convicted of rape is abominable. When someone is prosecuted, the prosecution should prove guilt beyond reasonable doubt and this may be obtained only through the production of concrete evidence. In an ideal world, all prosecutions should require proof in court beyond reasonable doubt and on no other lesser basis of so-called proof. Unfortunately, there is a problem, as sexual offences rarely have witnesses. While there may be DNA or video evidence in recent cases, for non-recent cases with no hope of forensic evidence, all the jury has to rely upon is court room arguments and opinions.

Of course, it must be accepted, as shown by the recent high profile cases, such as Harvey Weinstein in the USA and the late Max Clifford over here, that people in powerful positions have used their power to sexually exploit others. These cases do raise other important factors which could help in understanding the direction our once admired legal system seems to be taking. And that direction is certainly, at the moment, towards dispensing with proof beyond all reasonable doubt and with any such proof being based on factual evidence rather than hearsay. In both cases, the allegations really related to use of what used to be termed the ‘director’s couch’ and it might be remembered that, in the USA, this was both exposed and condemned in a publicly released letter by the late Maureen O’Hara in 1945. In both cases though, men have been tried and convicted of offences allegedly committed before such actions were officially regarded as criminal. We may, and I personally do, condemn both men for the actions they apparently took but, at the time of these actions, the predominately male dominated society as a whole did not see anything wrong with their behaviour and, in a very real sense, society accepted and even encouraged it. Indeed, it was common for people to be deemed prudes if they so much as questioned such behaviour at the time.

In the present climate, the very title ‘me-too’ tells it all and indicates that, in such cases, the authorities will have little need to trawl for others who have been supposedly assaulted since so many will be only too willing to say ‘me too’—especially if there is some money on offer as compensation for their alleged ‘trauma’!
Another point of particular relevance in the two cases highlighted here, given the professional background of so many of the accusers, is that maybe all the legal authorities concerned should view a copy of the wonderful 1957 film ‘Witness for the Prosecution’ starring Charles Laughton and Marlene Dietrich and then contemplate their actions extremely carefully. Of course, even non-professionals can act in the witness box and that is something of which all, including judges, barristers and jurors should be constantly aware but, as Marlene Dietrich superbly displays in the film, when a professional actress is involved, the result can be even more telling. Nevertheless, the alleged ‘coaching’ of some girls on how to give evidence when they’ve made accusations is a practice which should be stopped, partially, but not totally, because some are quite capable of producing seemingly genuine tears which can easily influence gullible jurors.

It also might be worth remembering that, as far as the late Max Clifford was concerned, his offences took place around the time Judge Pickles² criticized some young women for their provocative behaviour towards men, including their way of dressing. At the time, he was roundly condemned by many, including fellow members of the judiciary. Present day prosecutors would not even be allowed to think that way: it is ‘victim-blaming’ and would be ruled out of court.

Equally, the vast majority of men are not sexual predators, and prosecutors would do well to note that when they are vigorously attempting to secure jail sentences for them, many of whom will be innocent, which will if they are elderly could mean dying in jail. The resulting deaths in jail will be accompanied by others when people are either released from jail or found not guilty but find that the trauma experienced makes life back in normal society totally unbearable³.

**Suffering leading to Mental Health Issues**

On top of this, for many their suffering will lead to serious mental health issues⁴. None of this though will have any effect on the dedicated compensation hunters – both alleged victims and those both supporting them and, in many cases, egging them on in their pursuit of ‘justice’ for the ‘wrong’ done to them. Of course, for the many of these, ‘justice’ means financial compensation.

A similar argument may be applied to so-called historic cases of abuse. Once again, a moment’s thought indicates that, in the vast majority of such cases, there will be absolutely no concrete evidence either for the prosecution or, indeed, for the defence. Another worrying factor in such cases is that, on occasions, some actual concrete evidence for the defence is either conveniently ignored or not followed up. It might be remembered that such was the case as far as one conviction of Rolf Harris was concerned. It was eventually proved beyond all doubt that he hadn’t even been in the place of the alleged assault and his accuser had lied. However, once this was proved, our judiciary refused him leave to appeal against another similar conviction where again his defence was that he hadn’t even been in the place at the time (although the accuser couldn’t even remember the exact year) of the alleged offence.

**Trial by Allegation**

Unfortunately though, this trial by allegation continues and people are being convicted – some to die in jail – purely on the basis of hearsay evidence but in a climate where public opinion is ranged against the accused. Such was the fate recently of an elderly retired priest in Yorkshire. Apparently, someone had approached the Bishop nearer the time of the alleged offence but he had seen no good reason to proceed further. Over thirty years later, the said priest was found guilty by a jury but really on the basis of hearsay evidence and hearsay evidence assessed in a climate where public opinion was ranged against him; was sentenced and, within a very short period of time, had died in jail. Was he guilty or innocent? I don’t honestly know but I do know that hard solid evidence must have been absent at his trial because the alleged incidents occurred too long ago. What is completely evident though is that, in passing sentence, the judge concerned might well have donned the black cap of old because, given the accused’s age and health, that judge knew beyond all doubt – not just reasonable doubt - that he was sentencing someone to death in jail!

Once again, in all these cases, the prosecution was pursued in a present day mind-set, influenced by so many

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2. See the Independent 2010 Obituary on Judge Pickles, *James Pickles: Judge who caused controversy both in and out of the courtroom*.
3. See Reports ‘Robbed of Everything (2021) and ‘The Impact of being Wrongly Accused of Abuse in Occupations of Trust’ (2016), - page 1 of this magazine
4. See FACT’s website regarding How to cope: *The Suffering of the Wrongly Accused*. 
external factors. Unfortunately all these external factors simply act together to prejudice the minds of so many – judges, lawyers, jurors and even the general public – so that conviction after conviction is accepted as just and true. Which brings us back to that episode of Line of Duty.

‘What is corruption?’ must be the truly big question here. It is quite clear that those found to be guilty of corruption in the television drama were indeed corrupt and it is only too easy to see why that is so. The contention here though is that the overall level of corruption in our legal system goes much deeper and is far more widespread than anything depicted overtly in that television drama, although my personal opinion is that the writer did hint at it. Where the minds of those entrusted with upholding the law are corrupted by outside forces so that they pursue prosecutions incorrectly and where the courts subsequently punish people on the basis of known bias on the part of all sections of the prosecution side, the rule of law, as we hope it to be, really descends almost to a version of the law of the jungle; a case of survival of the fittest with one side attempting to survive in a jungle with little to offer in defence!

**Henriques Recommendations “the only hope”**
The only hope in sight at present is provided by the in-depth recommendations by Sir Richard Henriques. However, until the recommendations of that report, or something close to them, are implemented, the situation will remain dire. The corrupt minds must be cleared of their prejudices and all in authority must accept the responsibility they’re well paid to shoulder and that means unashamedly saying ‘mea culpa’ when appropriate and, as far as their careers are concerned, being prepared to resign even if they’re not totally to blame. Too many in the sort of situation envisaged simply think of themselves and not of the organisation they head. Such, for example, is the position of the Metropolitan Police from which no-one has had the grace to resign over any inappropriate action, both now and in the not-too-recent past - the latest of which is the appalling ‘Carl Beech’ affair!

It should not be the case that someone who is penniless is left at the mercy of lesser legal talent for defence.

Henriques must be fully implemented by the Metropolitan Police and by all police forces in this country. Next the practices of the entire legal profession when dealing with criminal matters must be reviewed. Here all levels of service should be available to all, regardless of their financial situation. By this is meant just what it says and it should not be the case that someone who is penniless is left at the mercy of lesser legal talent for defence.

However, possibly the biggest change must come to the judiciary. Their mind-set too is affected by outside influences, even though they might well claim the opposite to be true. Like all human beings, they too cannot put inbuilt prejudices and feelings to one side at the drop of a hat. They need to be regulated by some honourable independent body. For example, if a director of a company fails to declare a vested interest in a topic at a board meeting, that director can be prosecuted and jailed. However, when do judges declare such interests? No; they don’t but there have been circumstances in the recent past where such interests could – and, indeed, probably did – influence the outcome of a deliberation. They too should be held accountable just as any director of a firm would be.

Corruption of the mind as identified here depends on an almost total reliance on inbuilt prejudices and preconceived ideas. This oft unspoken form of corruption lies at the heart of so many problems facing humanity and definitely hinders progress in a wide variety of areas. However, its presence in legal matters is the concern here and its ramifications have been outlined above. This is certainly an issue which needs addressing urgently if our legal system is to become fair to all. Until this corruption is removed, real truth will remain elusive.

What further can be done to rectify the present situation? Firstly, the recommendations made by Sir Richard

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**Submitting Articles & Reviews to FACTion**

See page 39
New Zealand’s TV One anchor adopted his best concerned face – that blend of shock and sorrow usually reserved for terrorist attacks and earthquakes – when he introduced the channel’s item late in 2019 on sexual crime. “For every one hundred cases of sexual violence reported to police, only eleven end in a conviction.” Just in case demeanour alone wasn’t enough, he called the figure a “stark finding” of a four-year report from the Ministry of Justice.

His co-presenter added that the government “admits the result isn’t good enough, and is working to make it better.” She then crossed to the channel’s field reporter, who fleshed out the stats: for every hundred complaints made to police, thirty-one lead to charges, eleven to convictions and “just six lead to a prison sentence.” She added that, because most sexual crimes are not reported, the overall conviction rate is “thought to be” just one percent, though changes in procedures led to a 34% increase in cases reaching court in the preceding year.

Viewers then saw interviews with two people. Sexual abuse survivor “Hannah”, through a dimmed lens, said she was pleased that her abuser was duly convicted, but she called the system “traumatic”. She said, “They don’t really view you as a person; it’s like you’re just a piece of evidence.” Under-secretary for justice Jan Logie called it “shocking” that it has taken until 2019 for any government to find out what happens after victims report, and lamented that recent changes are just “tinkering around the edges.”

Stark finding...not good enough...working to make it better...traumatic...shocking...just a piece of evidence...tinkering: the language of the news report conveyed the impression of inaction and inhuman treatment, of miscarriages of justice in numbers so...
massive that it is a national scandal. Lazy and hidebound detectives? A biased legal system? In fact, neither, because the numbers have been shoehorned into the only acceptable narrative. Every word in this item – the news script, the comments by Hannah and by justice under-secretary Jan Logie, the Ministry report itself – implies that sexual suspects can be divided into just two groups: perpetrators who do jail time and perpetrators who walk free. The government has a social and moral duty to boost the former group at the expense of the latter. Consistent use of the word victim instead of complainant confirms this bias. In plain terms, there is a national emergency – but only if we assume that all defendants are guilty and that the only good trial is in effect a show trial.

Every media report on sexual crime works from the same assumption. In an online article on stuff.co.nz by Brittny Deguara on November 26 2019 Kathryn McPhillips, executive director of HELP, an Auckland support service for victims of sexual crime, took issue with anyone insensitive enough to question the word victim for people who make sexual accusations. She conceded that complainant may work as a legal term, but insisted it isn't accurate in the world of victim support. “If you've been harmed you're a victim,” she said. This is a peculiar comment, because it begs the question of whether the sexual abuse occurred. If it didn’t, you've suffered no harm, but events appear to be mere details to Ms McPhillips. Are feelings enough? ...

Wrongful sexual accusations are always serious

... wrongful sexual accusations... are always serious, often devastating and sometimes life-destroying. They are also common. To justify this claim, I’ll turn to the statistics – what they show, what they don’t and what they can’t.

I first need to write a few words about words. In the examples that follow I refer to accusers as female simply because they usually are, just as sexual offenders are usually male. I acknowledge that there are many exceptions to both of these patterns. I also use activists to refer to people who work to increase convictions for sexual crimes and to improve the treatment of rape and sexual assault victims. Any noun here can seem confrontational. I don't intend the word itself to be disparaging, and these people are of course free to campaign on behalf of one kind of victim, just as I campaign for a different kind; that is the nature of advocacy. They can feel free to call me the same. However, I disagree with the way they read the figures, and activists is just a useful term for those who are my statistical adversaries on this issue.

A small number of activists are adamant that false sexual accusations never happen at all. For example, prominent New Zealand campaigner Louise Nicholas has said, “Women don’t lie about this stuff.” This is a bizarre claim. Activists must at least concede, for example, that innocent black men were lynched after false rape allegations by white Southern women. Is it really likely that women have made wrongful allegations only in one part of one country, only out of racial bigotry, and only in the past?

Fortunately, most concede that false sexual accusations do occur. However, this concession is a hypothetical one made only to appear open-minded, because in almost all actual cases the hashtag dogma of #believethevictim muscles its way in and takes over. Even moderates insist that false allegations are extremely uncommon. The mantra of the moment appears to be vanishingly rare, and statistical comparisons with fatal lightning strikes are especially popular. Working men who have understandably become nervous about meeting or mentoring female colleagues are either grandstanders or wimps, because no honourable man needs to harbour any fears and the only issue is the vast number of predators who escape punishment.

The myth of low rates of false allegations has become such a comforting article of faith that no column on the subject is complete if it fails to remind readers of their infrequency. ...

Wrongful accusations also lead to convictions

Wrongful accusations also lead to convictions far more often than is suggested. Admittedly, the private nature of most sexual crime means that cases sink into the mire of he said/she said, and it can be hard to convict offenders. In most developed countries, laws have therefore been changed to allow conviction for sexual crimes just on the testimony of the accuser. The prosecuting lawyer will urge jurors to convict if they find her convincing. They often do, assuming that what looks like smoke must
mean fire. How often are they mistaken? No one can know, but sometimes they must be. If medical diagnoses based on scientific criteria can produce false positive results, it is certain that verdicts based on a single and subjective criterion – a “ring of truth” in an accuser’s story – produce even more.

Fortunately for genuine victims, nowadays sexual crime policies are more accommodating towards accusers than in the skeptical past. However, it should be no surprise that the more inclusive the system, the higher the proportion of false positives, as liars, fantasists and pretenders are gathered in the net. This especially applies to “non-recent” accusations. The result is that innocent men – many of them elderly – languish in jail, abandoned as perverts by all except a tiny number of supporters among family and friends. A local lawyer told me false historical allegations are such an epidemic that most men convicted are probably innocent. A miscarriage of justice in a “ring of truth” case is especially difficult to overturn. The mere hope that a second jury or judge may be less impressed by the complainant’s court performance is no grounds for appeal. The exasperating fact is that new evidence is needed – in a case in which evidence played no role from the outset.

Activists complain that sexual offenders escape justice

Activists complain that sexual offenders escape justice. True, but prosecutors do not abandon any clearly winnable sexual case because pursuing it would run against public interest. Recently I saw on television a wheelchair-bound man in his eighties, face obscured, being pushed by distressed relatives into the courtroom to face charges for what he may have done five decades ago. Is it in the public interest that he is prosecuted? I’m not sure, but I find it disturbing that no one in government or the media even ventures to ask the question. As prosecution guidelines for sexual crimes are vastly different from prosecution guidelines for false accusations, conviction numbers must be analysed and compared with great caution. Paradoxically, activists themselves can hardly claim they don’t grasp the mathematics. After all, they deny that we can deduce sexual crime numbers from conviction numbers. No one dares claim that low conviction rates for sexual crime can count as proof that it is rare, but activists insist that low false allegation conviction rates can – in fact, must – count as proof that false allegations are rare. The goose enjoys all the data advantages while the gander gets nothing.

There is huge political pressure in the UK, as there is here, to boost convictions for sexual crimes. Most British activists are apoplectic with fury that any false accusers are prosecuted and insist the only injustice is that prosecutors are too reluctant to go after real perpetrators. Don’t blame Mark Pearson for disagreeing. He’s the man who was prosecuted (and thankfully acquitted) after “penetratively” assaulting a female passerby as he walked through Waterloo Station carrying a newspaper in one hand and a briefcase in the other. He barely broke stride. An expert called by the defence showed that the CPS were so intent on a conviction that they slowed down the CCTV footage to make the offence appear possible. This must have been deliberate act, but of course no one at the CPS faced consequences.

Conclusion

Is this a war between activists and supporters of the falsely accused? In one sense, yes. Ideally it wouldn’t be; ideally both sides would be motivated by their shared humanity and seek justice for everyone who has been wronged. Unfortunately, activists recognise only one kind of victim and dismiss with a derisory shrug the numerically lesser tragedy of false sexual accusations. They brand anyone who pursues the issue as a men’s rights activist and therefore beneath contempt. In another sense it’s barely a skirmish. Governments have the deepest war chests and chose their side decades ago. This means that activists have such all-conquering power, money and influence that it’s like fighting the 82nd Airborne Division with plastic swords. The unfunded advocates for the falsely accused are so few, so scattered and so powerless that we can simply be ignored.

We’ll battle on, of course. The odds are hopeless, but we can’t abandon the campaign while one innocent person is in jail simply because someone who seemed credible said he was guilty.
Guilty
even though proved innocent
by a FACT Member

How is it possible to be cleared, twice, of a serious offence yet remain unable to recover normal life and wind up losing one's family, career and income? I offer the following structure of my case as a road-map. I call it “turning a SNAFU¹ into a FUBAR²”, and then squaring the result; alternatively, it might be called a straightforward state sector cover-up. The saga began twenty years ago

In February 2004 I wrote to the Head of Social Services of my Local Authority (LA) suggesting that there had been a SNAFU in their “multidisciplinary” approach to handling a seemingly straightforward but high-impact mental health case. In 2001, immediately after giving birth, my wife had been admitted to a psychiatric hospital at the behest of the LA, under threat of sectioning or removal of the baby (and other children). The basis of the intervention had been that during the pregnancy she had developed the paranoid delusion that she was not pregnant and that she had a rapidly developing abdominal tumour. The delusion, which she had experienced after previous pregnancies, had vanished upon the onset of labour, and she was amnesic about it. This satisfied the medical professionals generally (hereafter, “the NHS”) who had managed it, I thought, superficially as psychosis associated with Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BPD) and more deeply as Borderline Personality Disorder and False Memory. However, the LA were not satisfied and after three months they took control of the discharge planning and ultimately the entire family structure, overturning the medical care plan. This had a high impact, as they refused to allow her to return home after three months in hospital, during which time I was the primary carer of our two children and her three from a previous marriage, all girls. During this time and two further months in a half-way house, she lost all sense of identify of being my wife and had, loosely speaking, a nervous breakdown, including a couple of life-threatening further psychotic episodes during experimental home leave in the family home, and a period of uncontrollable, irrational rages directed specifically at me.

The LA continued to sabotage the NHS post-discharge care plan for discharge into the marital home and instead tolerated, condoned, or insisted on their own plan under which she lived, serially, with various other men that she met in the hospital and with whom she had formed a series of folie à deux relationships, known as Nightingale relationships. We both took legal advice, which was to abide with the LA decision and not to resist being split up, but for widely different reasons. This had led to our divorce, under bizarre circumstances in 2003. The proceedings were uncontested. By that time my wife had recovered some degree of sanity on a week-by-week basis and was aware of the immediate surrounding and situation, but her narrative of the preceding years was completely delusional, not merely from the time of the pregnancy. (The delusions involved multiple false allegations of rape by senior army officers, company directors, and by me, and fanciful claims of date-rape, lengthy imprisonment and rape.) Apart from her memory and BPD, we were, superficially in the first year of a conventional 2000s divorce: the children stay with their mother who alienates them against their father, but “allows” contact every other week-end and the father hangs on to up to one third of marital assets. My wife maintained one Nightingale relationship and the LA assisted them to move into a rented house, with the children. This was a clear incompatibility between the LA and the NHS about the post-discharge care plan and it was that incompatibility that I pointed out to the LA. I suggested that the situation was SNAFU: Situation Normal, All Fouled Up, because the LA were not following the NHS Care plan and indeed were sabotaging it. The response, in my opinion, was dramatic: FUBAR, Fouled Up Beyond All Repair, which I now explain.

1. SNAFU: Situation Normal, All Fouled Up
2. FUBAR: Fouled Up Beyond All Repair,
For the next six months I was approached by a series of social workers, two police officers and, indirectly, the LA Legal Services Department, who collectively deployed an escalating sequence of threats of retribution should I comply with the NHS plan rather than the LA plan. This dispute culminated in an ultimatum on Thursday 19th August 2004 from two social workers to withdraw my SNAFU letter, by order of the LA Legal Services Department. I stood my ground. On the following day my two children unexpectedly visited for a week-end contact visit, arranged, they said, by the social worker. I smelt a rat. After an otherwise unremarkable weekend I returned them to their mother the following Sunday. I have never seen them since.

Immediately upon her return to her mother my elder daughter, then aged five, was taken by the social worker to the local police station where she was invited, on video, to disclose that I had engaged in “digital penetration” of her genitalia. She declined. The police took the procedural view that there was “insufficient evidence” of any crime having been committed by me and did not contact me. However, the allegation clearly reached my “employer” on the same day. I had been on a teacher training programme since 2003 and was preparing to start supervised classroom teaching at the start of term September 2004. On the day of registration, which was the same as the police interview, I was told by the course provider not to turn up as there were “issues”, and to contact the LA Legal Services Department. However, my ex responded first.

The trial collapsed completely when the social worker, presented with the video, admitted that she had made up the entire story

My ex attempted to use the supposed disclosure as evidence to support an application for complete denial of contact the following month; the court hearing, not the application, was the first I had heard of a disclosure. Consequently I was immediately put on trial within the Family Court system. The trial collapsed completely when the social worker, presented with the video, admitted that she had made up the entire story of a disclosure, and essentially all other supporting documentation in 2004 to 2005, under instructions from “management”. The judge would not allow the social worker to name “management”; I provisionally identified “management” as mainly LA Legal Services, along with LA Social Services Child Protection middle management. I managed to get legal representation and eventually I received a Finding Of Fact that I had not abused my daughter as alleged or at all. The judge ordered contact, and my wife appeared to agree to it. However, to my amazement, the LA blocked the contact, adopted the case, appointed their own barrister and fought for a further two years in the courts with a series of bizarre feeble allegations, all intended to suppress rather than encourage paternal contact. Some of these involved allegations of Satanic Ritual Abuse (SRA), some of emotional and physical neglect of the children during contact with me. There were referrals to four “experts” in satanic and emotional abuse of children, all inconclusive and without evidence, being merely “psychological models” or NSPCC guidelines. The case was in a perpetual cycle of allegation, expert advice and dismissal, and I had exhausted all financial resources, and presumably my ex had also; the Legal Aid dried up, and only the funding, inexhaustible, came from the LA authority to fund their barrister. Total costs, excluding the LA costs, were over £50,000 (far more than the legal cost of the divorce) and I was insolvent and “sofa-surfing”. The judge finally abandoned the case in desperation without a judgment — when the cleaners came to clean the court!

The nearest clue I could find to my wife’s thinking was that she was horrified when was shown a fragment of my submission to a child protection conference in which I had dismissed SRA Theory as bollocks. She recalled an expert witness, previously supportive of me, who now, under questioning from the judge, suggested that my wording showed contempt for the doctrine of transubstantiation and “taking the piss out of Christianity”. This was the first mention of religion in the entire case, and appears to be the basis for the dismissal of my counter-application, though I consider it a pretext. Throughout the hearings the judge refused to engage in any discussion of the LA intervention prior to the SNAFU letter. The judge died, and my barrister abandoned law and was ordained as a minister of religion instead, ending the matter for the time being.

Despite all this, I was able to resume my teacher training programme in 2008 using a different course provider, and even started classroom teaching but, to my despair, again it was sabotaged when the LA, though not providing the training, vetoed my setting foot in any
In the county, citing their interpretation of a court order from 2004 as being permanent rather than vacated in 2007. This was to be their undoing.

Homeless and again sofa-surfing, I applied for my social services record. Initially I received a standard “no records found” response but persisted, eventually having a face-to-face row with a junior access-to-records clerk. In 2009 the clerk sent me a CD of some hundred pages dating right back to the initial intervention in 2001, but with most records being in the first eight months of 2004, that is, after the SNAFU letter but before the date of the alleged offence. It approximated to a social media chit-chat or emails and faxes between about sixty junior people within the LA, with no structure other than date-stamping and e-signatures and no access control or audit trail. However, it was nearly all redacted, especially in early August 2004. The clerk told me the redaction was on the direct orders of the “Legal Services Department”.

Even with the redaction, it was clear that the LA had had far more involvement than I had realised in 2001, but it too was redacted. Also such information as was readable was manifestly different to what the LA had told the court (in their “Section 7 report”). I was stymied for a time, but then had an unexpected development coming from my children’s schools.

I had never received any progress reports from the schools, save for my eldest’s reception year. Despite the redaction, I was able to deduce the name of the schools they attended from the CD, using Sudoku-style inferencing of missing words. By this time my children were on transition from primary to secondary school, and I had had no contact since August 2004. Without thinking about the contact dispute, I simply wrote to the school asking for options. I received an extraordinarily threatening letter from the Head of Social Services threatening me with arrest for contacting the school in violation of the court order. I fired back an immediate suggestion that he consult an optician about looking for the words “vacated order” (i.e. annulled). This led to a lively exchange culminating with my serving notice on him on a technical point: to appear in court to defend his decision to continue to order the school head teachers not to communicate with me, apparently violating Section 576 of the relevant Education Act which requires schools to supply progress reports and options for education. I also supplied an index, but not content, of substantially all the evidence of the SNAFU and the FUBAR, including a summary of the court hearings. I served the entire bundle on the Head of Legal Services at reception at his place of work on Friday 1st April 2011. On Monday he was found hanged, on my daughter’s birthday.

I was shocked and concerned lest my confrontation had triggered this tragedy. I immediately contacted the police, discussed the matter, and ultimately found myself at the inquest on 31st August, being possibly the last person to interact with him in his work. The inquest was held in camera, with only the coroner and a secretary present throughout, the rest of us being admitted at various times. I was not permitted to say anything substantial. There were suicide notes, a précis of which were presented by the coroner to the attendees and the press. These did not shed much light on his state of mind, apart from denying that his suicide was anything to do with bullying from the LA CEO and her Common Purpose and Neurolinguistic Programming regime, though it was work-related. The coroner refused to allow me to mention, within the formal part of the inquest, that I was possibly the last person to interact with him before his death or the substance of that interaction. The LA and coroner cobbled together a fig-leaf in the form of “stress related to library budget cuts” and gave it out to the press outside. However, immediately after the formal end, I spoke to some other LA staff, despite opposition from the coroner, and we agreed there was a cover-up. The coroner referred the matter to two separate inquiries, funded by £200,000 from the LA, designed to exonerate the CEO. However, only one was conducted, and I testified to it, but its report was never made public and is not available despite the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. This left me in a state of anxiety for several years, which is essentially the entire time that my children were at secondary school. I abandoned all hope of finishing the training course, and also became very dispirited when I received job rejections for work which had been my main occupation since graduation right up to the time the children disappeared. During that time, I occasionally contacted their schools, but each time was referred to the Legal Services Department instruction not to communicate with me.

Eventually, I reached state retirement age, began to pay off debt, and was in a position to consider better accommodation, but I thought I would try one final attempt in the court. I made an application to the Family Court in 2014 and requested that the new head of legal services for the LA be invited to court to supply the information denied by the late one. In writing to the
Family Court in response the new head denied any LA knowledge of the case. Before the initial, and only, hearing he had asked the judge to dismiss the case immediately, which he did in no uncertain terms. In his raging against me, the judge conceded accidentally that he knew the new head of legal services very well and accused me of calling the new head a liar, which indeed I was. I even had with me numerous letters which clearly identified the LA Legal Services team as very active in the matter, including letters from both the deceased and the new heads, and the result of police and Local Government Ombudsman investigations so there was no way he could not have known about the case, even before being served notice! My assessment was that the cover-up was continuing.

I have had no contact with my children; I have lost my life savings

Where does that leave me in 2021? I have not had any contact with my children since 2004 and, with hindsight, my family life, even as a divorced father, ended then. My attempt to switch careers was blocked, despite the allegation which caused it being dismissed by the police and the courts. I have lost my life savings, mainly through loss of earnings, but also through an expensive divorce settlement and legal fees. However, the case also leaves the Local Authority with a number of skeletons in the cupboard. The whole saga now looks like a cover-up of a blunder. The original intervention and hospitalisation of my wife was against all medical opinion for handling Borderline Personality Disorder and related dramatic personality disorders and was, in my opinion, a blunder. The subsequent LA decision to persuade her to move, while still hospitalised, to an unsuitable "half-way house" rather than the marital home was the SNAFU. The admitted attempt to fit me up for a charge of rape in order to effect a cover-up, by distraction and filibuster, was the FUBAR. The FUBAR was squared when, after it had been exposed in court by the social worker, the LA ordered all schools and their legal services department to block all communications with me and then to deny all involvement at in 2014. My guess is that there is a culture of bullying, coercion and compliance that permeates the hierarchy with the LA, especially the Social Services Child Protection Service, intended to pursue an agenda rather than provide a service, and which hide rather than corrects inevitable blunders.

In particular I believe that the social worker was scapegoated and was the unfortunate one who got caught out for faking documentation, but I believe her assertion that she was bullied into doing this in 2004. The inquest in 2011 was the epitome of a further cover-up, organised by or tolerated by the coroner, to avoid exposure of state-sector incompetence or malfeasance. I currently believe that the subsequent “independent inquiry” was never intended to inquire independently, but merely to return a pre-agreed conclusion in exchange for a six-figure invoice for a few days’ work.

The above is a brief summary of the structure of my case. The full documentation runs to some 4,000 pages. For brevity I have omitted discussion of: child protection conferences (a complete kangaroo court), NSPCC (SRA obsessed), the police (they refuse to record malfeasance in public office as a crime), Princess Royal Trust (a brilliant mental health charity; they’ve seen it all before), the NHS Adult mental health team (competent but secretive), BFMS (invaluable) and above all FACT (giving me the confidence to be convinced that I am not suffering my own paranoid delusions of a state conspiracy). I offer this summary in the hope that others may find it similar to their own experiences or as a warning of what can happen when pursuing justice.

Coping Strategies
Website Views Pass 10,000
A really important statistic

The views of our webpage on ‘How to cope with the psychological impact of false allegations’ has just passed 10,000. This an important indication of how much the wrongly accused need help. The lack of support for those who find themselves and their families traumatised by false allegations of abuse can lead to self harm, suicide, drug dependency and family breakup.

FACT is here for them.

factuk.org
What Will Our Scar Tell?

Every scar has a story,  
what will ours tell?  
What will come of this  
when I am out of this place  
and home with my wife?

I want our scar to tell how we overcame  
of how we made it through  
and how far we have come.  
I want our scar to whisper above the pain we faced.

Not all scars can be seen,  
they are inside  
hidden in your heart  
and hidden from the world.

But mostly I want my scar to speak  
of something greater than me  
I want to shout about  
my loving wife and family  
Who fought my scars’ battles  
and on whose wings I soared.

Let my scar proclaim  
that all living things work for good  
that by myself I could not live  
But with my wife and family I could.

Let them take a look,  
let them peek and see  
My scar that shows how great they are  
That it points to them, not me.

From every wound there is a scar  
and every scar tells a story  
A story that says “we are getting through”  
that I survived and you did too.

Adapted by AC from a poem by © Kristina M. DeCarlo,  
https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/every-scar-has-a-story
LOCAL AUTHORITIES ADMIT HUNDREDS OF COMPLAINTS MADE AGAINST TEACHERS HAVE NO MERIT

However she reported that in 2007 the Department for Children, Schools and Families carried out a review of allegations against staff working with children and young people across the whole of the children's workforce.

"128 local authorities provided data on 3,099 allegations where action was concluded in the period 1 April 2007 to 30 September 2007.

"2.8 per cent of these concluded allegations were judged to be malicious and 13.4 per cent were judged to be unfounded.

A F.A.C.T. spokesman said that given the increasing publicity given to the vulnerability of teachers to false allegation it is surprising that the Government do not require local authorities to monitor the extent to which teachers are subject to allegations and false ones in particular.

The fact that they do not require this would seem to suggest they don't care.

"The figures quoted for 2007 are undoubtedly an under estimate. The position has not only deteriorated since then, but also does not take into account figures for private schools. Furthermore the data provided by the local authorities was for a four month period, one month of which includes the school summer holidays.

"Extrapolated over a full year the figures suggest that at least 10,000 allegations are dealt with annually and that over 1,300 will be regarded as unfounded of which 280 will be malicious. This is totally unacceptable.

Lord Hytton asked Her Majesty's Government how many teachers have been falsely accused of offences in the most recent years for which figures are available.

Have you thought about sponsoring an edition of FACTion?
Dear Home Secretary

We are writing regarding the False Accusations pandemic in the UK. You may not have any knowledge of the several hundreds of innocent falsely accused men (mainly) and women and their families who have been completely and utterly failed by the incompetence of the Police, the CPS and the failed justice system – the extent of which you may not be fully aware, although touched upon briefly in your correspondence to Sir Richard Henriques of 16th March 2021 regarding Operation Midland.

We are a group of broken families brought together by the injustice of wrongful convictions of innocent, decent, honest, hard-working, law-abiding family men and women accused of sexual abuse (usually historic) all naively believing that no-one could be found guilty of a crime that you hadn't committed or indeed, that didn't even exist. How wrong we all were!

We are all now vulnerable victims of the UK’s unprincipled and unscrupulous justice system that allows guilty verdicts on non-existent crimes. Unfortunately, several hundreds more are being sent to prison by our failing, inept "justice" system.

We are all devastated at the appalling treatment we have received from Police, CPS, legal aid lawyers, barristers and the judiciary. We have been sacrificed, robbed of everything, our lives ruined and our whole families including children and grandchildren deeply traumatised - without any evidence whatsoever nor having the privilege of the Police carrying out a full and thorough investigation – if they had, they would have soon discovered who was the victim – the falsely accused!

We thought our loved ones’ innocence and our trust in Police would be enough to protect us but instead, they have destroyed us without a thought or care for our families whom they have violated with lifelong consequences of their actions.

Due Process has been removed, Innocent until Proven Guilty has been removed, Beyond Reasonable Doubt has been removed and Fair Trials are not an option in alleged sexual abuse cases. This has obviously and undoubtedly resulted in thousands of unsafe convictions for innocent people as “believe the victim” has transcended all else!

Taken from Sir Richard Henriques Report: ‘It is the policy of the [MPS] to accept allegations made by the victim in the first instance as being truthful. An allegation will only be considered as falling short of a substantiated allegation after a full and thorough investigation.’

Full and thorough police investigations are not carried out, neither are the Police impartial which suggests that Police are biased from the outset. Police are required by oath to investigate impartially "without fear or favour". We all mistakenly put our trust in the Police – tragically it is too late for us all.

We are appealing to you on behalf of Falsely Accused Letters to the Establishments UK and MeTooFalselyAccused – just two of a number of groups set up on social media by a vast number of families and friends of those falsely accused and with loved ones in prison, all wrongfully arrested, charged, convicted and given long term prison sentences on the uncorroborated word of just one person that the Police have predetermined is the “victim”

The Answer to Injustice is not to silence the critic  
FASELY ACCUSED  
LETTERS TO THE ESTABLISHMENTS  
but to end the injustice - Paul Robeson  

FASELY ACCUSED DAY – 9th September 2021 – https://falselyaccusedday.org
most common reason innocent people are wrongly convicted. An innocent person can be sentenced to 20 years in prison based on a jury’s “guesswork” - comparative to the flip of a coin, tails you win, heads you lose. That is the basis of our justice system on false accusations of historic sexual abuse. The scales of justice are truly unbalanced.

There are massive numbers of serial liars like sex abuse fantasist Carl Beech and Jemma Beale, Laura Hood, Clarice Crothers, Eleanor Williams and many others, claiming thousands of pounds from Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority, the likes of whom have been convicted for their malicious and vengeful compensation-seeking false accusations. Compensation is given to the false accuser without any evidence, dates, names or details, just a Police reference number. It is highly likely that this trend will attract more liars to come forward to fraudulently claim compensation and send even more innocent people to prison. The system is both incentivising and rewarding the false accuser and contributing to long term psychological issues for families and children of the falsely accused.

There are many reasons why someone would make a false accusation of sexual abuse: revenge, malice, jealousy, attention-seeking, regret, financial gain, spite, misandry, mental illness, anxiety and depressive disorders, drugs addictions, anti-social personality disorders, narcissism, stress-related disorders, false memory (Memory is very fluid and malleable, much more than we think. German research has shown that memories can be implanted and removed, which is why prosecution on the basis of someone’s declared memory and nothing more, is so wrong), parent alienation (where false accusations are made to destroy and alienate the father), and autism which often goes undiagnosed – “an autistic female creates a fantasy world which contributes to their bizarre and disruptive behaviour” – such behaviour being blamed on the falsely accused who has caused their behaviour due to “alleged” sexual abuse.

Many people have sadly decided to end their life after a false accusation (1416 suicides since 2016) rather than be labelled as a “Sex Offender” for the rest of their life, preferring not to spend the accusation (1416 suicides since 2016) rather than be labelled as a sexual abuse.

There is no removal, which is why the falsely accused who has caused their behaviour due to “alleged” sexual abuse are inaccurate as male rapes and false accusations are not taken into account, which would make the figures completely off balance, and the Victims Commissioner deny that either occur. The high number of alleged rape cases has been boosted by the way they are counted by occurrences rather than by victims. Also inaccurate is the Sex Offenders Register which hold names of innocent men and women and is therefore not correct or exact, making its content seemingly invalid due to its inaccuracies. Innocent falsely accused are forced to sign this register or they are given extra years to serve.

We are not in denial, as we are so often labelled and our loved ones will continue to maintain their innocence as we are all innocent victims of a broken, neglected, dishonourable and disreputable judicial system. We want justice for the falsely accused. We want impartiality from the Police, CPS, lawyers and barristers whose legal representation can be extremely poor, we want disclosure issues rectified and we want to save hundreds of families going through the same terrifying experiences that we have been subjected to.

CPS has readily admitted convicting 1500 innocent people per annum. Reference to these stats can be found on BBC iPlayer “I Am Not a Rapist” featuring Liam Allan – a gripping short film telling the dramatic story of three young men falsely accused of rape and the devastating consequences the allegations had on their lives.

Liam Allan narrowly missed a long prison sentence when his lawyer found exculpatory evidence that the Police should have found and produced in Court had they carried out a proper, impartial investigation. Liam and his partner are now supporting our groups and hundreds of other families caught up in this nightmare situation, with a website and a 24/7 helpline which was launched this week.

Unfortunately just a few wrongly convicted actually make it as far as the Appeal Courts and are successfully released from prison although they can never totally be free of their conviction as the “sex offence” follows them around for the rest of their lives!

Appeals are notoriously difficult and expensive and one can only be granted if new evidence is presented. Where does one find new evidence when none existed in the first place?

No compensation is awarded to those who have been falsely accused & consequently incarcerated – nor do they receive an apology for their stressful and traumatic life-changing suffering and torment to themselves or their families. Yet, the false accusers are free to walk away with thousands of pounds of taxpayers money with no prosecution for wasting Police time and resources, fraud, perjury & perverting the course of justice. They are privileged with anonymity – allowing them to falsely accuse another innocent and naive member of the public - this needs to be avoided at all costs - we have to break this cycle and make the public aware of false accusers.

It is imperative that the judicial system be honest and impartial, sturdier, fairer, unbiased and more robust, to ensure that the right person is convicted and a crime was actually committed, instead of imprisoning innocent people for non-existent crimes.

Police have been told to “believe the victim” and allow the jury to be “lie detectors” without any real, proper evidence. Life sentences have been given to those innocent people and their families.

Lady Justice Hallett stated at Jemma Beale’s Appeal “The idea that a woman could send an innocent man to prison for years solely so she could obtain compensation beggars belief.” Unfortunately this is happening to the unsuspecting public every day. For every false accusation, Lady Justice Hallett says “the system of justice had suffered significant harm”.

Eleanor Laws QC defending Philip Law, long time chauffeur of Brian May and Anita Dobson said in her summing up “There is no independent supporting evidence whatsoever other than what has come out of the complainant’s mouth”. Unfortunately, exactly what came out of a complainant’s mouth has put several hundred people in prison. She went on to tell the jury Mr Webb had become “a demon to blame” for all of her addiction and mental health problems. (cutting attached).

Open Letter to Priti Patel continued...
We are happy to send you more details & evidence on how the justice system has completely let us all down, families, children and grandchildren, and continues to do so.

Also being let down are the genuine victims – the ones who also deserve justice, as well as the falsely accused who are currently sitting in prison cells, some in solitary confinement for several months at a time.

The mental health of the falsely accused and their families has caused lifelong damage which has been exacerbated by the innocent spending years in prison and being separated from their families.

Reporting false allegations is clearly therefore very much in the public interest. Families have a right to know that their loved ones can, and will, go to prison if a false accusation is made against them - we want to put an end to the unlawful practice of convicting innocent people for non-existent crimes. We want to put an end to “believe only the victim” and not the suspect, we want to see an end to the innocent being used as “live bait” as Cliff Richards describes these “witch-hunts” and to stop Police “chasing convictions” at whatever cost to the innocents.

The UK public should know what is at stake and that a loved one can be convicted & given a long prison sentence for a non-existent crime!! All the exculpatory evidence to prove innocence existed in most cases, but Police chose to pervert the course of justice and ignore or remove it, preferring to see innocent people convicted and forsaking justice for higher conviction rates and promotions.

We need accountability and we would welcome the opportunity to discuss with you what really needs to change to stop false accusations and stop the lifelong harm and distress caused by securing convictions of innocent people whom our country and our Government, should be protecting.

Whilst every sympathy is with genuine victims and we know, of course that women and children need to be protected from predators and sexual abusers, having a loved family member in prison has no damage limitation to the innocent or to their families, it just creates more abuse, more victims.

The following pages show falsely accused family members’ terrifying experiences and heartbreaking comments and gives an insight of what a massive injustice this country has on its hands.

As long as “believe the victim” is in place despite Sir Richard Henriques recommendations, Operation Midland will be repeated again and again to the rich and famous, and at our end of the scale, the non-famous or not particularly rich innocents’ lives & those of their families will continue to be tragically destroyed for good.

How will you regain ours, our childrens’ and our grandchildrens’ trust if you do not address this horrific situation?

Respectfully Yours

Ms Sheila Harmon
on behalf of members of Falsely Accused Letters to the Establishments & MeTooFalselyAccused

POLICE CHIEF’S HARASSMENT PLEDGE IS A TRAVESTY OF JUSTICE

“Here we go again. Simon Bailey, the Chief Constable of Norfolk urges young women who wish to make complaints of sexual harassment at school to “have confidence that you will be believed.”

Have the Police learned nothing?

Many innocent men suffered as a result of their ludicrous policy of believing anyone who cried child abuse and the manic ramblings of a fantasist were publicly pronounced to be “credible and true.”

“How have confidence that you will be treated respectfully” is fine but it turns justice on its head to promise that any complainant will be automatically believed.”

Does the Chief Constable not care that men need to have confidence in the justice system and in the fairness of investigations too?

This rot started with Keir Starmer when he was running the Crown Prosecution Service, grew rampant under his successor Alison Saunders and is now set deep in the policing psyche.

Stand by for another Operation Midland.”

Ann Widdecombe

Daily Express – 31st March 2021
In Memory of Roy Catchpole

Rev Roy Catchpole
FACT Committee Member
Died 21st December 2020

He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker,
but whoever is kind to the needy honours their God.
Proverbs 14 v 31

Given this text [above] for his life-long ministry, it underlines how Roy was never one of those clergy who sat at a desk when there are visits to be made or initiatives for mission, or help for the needy in whatever capacity to be taken up: indeed, he was technically adept and multi-skilled in all the modern media, and his blogs are many and various to say nothing of his more thorough writings. But to him ministry was about being and meeting Christ in the world: action, getting things done, contacting/visiting the needy person, prayer to be offered for them. He would have heartily concurred with the often used sentiment of St Teresa of Avila sometimes used in Anglican ordination services that ‘Christ has no hands today but yours with which to bless the world’, and that is precisely what he set about doing after his own ordination in the Diocese of Chelmsford in September 1974.

Roy, was a board member of FACT for three years. His own experience led him direct to the mission of FACT. Perhaps uniquely in his case, there were to be two victims, both the plaintiff, a close personal friend and fellow parishioner at St Paul’s church in the parish of Sherborne Abbey and himself as the defendant. Falsely accused from the outset, he found being referred to in the trial throughout as the perpetrator very distressing: in fact he was equally the victim of the plaintiff’s medical distress, flashbacks and the horror of her own experiences. Although no direct evidence was ever revealed, she had been the victim in the successful prosecution of her employer at Taunton Crown Court in 1994 for sexual abuse, including attempted rape, which resulted in a prison sentence for him of six years. David Martin Sperry, Roy’s Barrister at that time, said:

At the retrial, material emerged – from a witness entirely unconnected to Roy Catchpole – which resulted in the judge immediately stopping the trial. In January 2016 the same Judge confirmed that no further proceedings would take place and in discharging Roy the judge took the unusual, but in this case entirely justified, step of apologising to him in open court, and awarding full costs to him and all of his support team. The case was also unusual in that the complainant here was someone of personal integrity who had been subjected to serious incidents of sexual assault many years ago, the perpetrator then having received a significant custodial sentence at Taunton Crown Court 1994; and thereafter she had been suffering continuing documented ‘flashbacks’ over the year. She was receiving medical treatment for her own diagnosis of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), at the time of the incidents which led to Roy’s arrest.
This effectively meant that there were TWO victims and both their families, and no perpetrator, unless it be the determination of the Prosecutor in the first trial (March 2014) to convict a member of the male Anglican clergy of significant sexual abuse. The Prosecution’s opening remarks, as it proved entirely without foundation, were faithfully reprinted in full on the front page of Yeovil’s prominent local paper ‘Western Gazette’ the following week, and this remained the only public statement on the case until Roy was invited to make his own statement after his acquittal.

Nevertheless neither the diocese, nor its safeguarding team (who apparently did not follow the judicial proceedings at all) have ever made any public statement about this exoneration (though they had been quick to make a public statement about his arrest!). Nor did any officer of the diocese arrange any kind of return or welcome for Roy. No instruction was given to the parish priest as to how to deal with the glaring inconsistency of this unique situation: it troubled all the congregation that the complainant and her family, and Roy and his family, plus all the various supporters of both sides were expected to worship together in the same church.

Roy discovered later (on the death of the plaintiff) that the Incumbent [his parish priest] had employed her as the carer of his own children: how could the Incumbent fulfil his duty of being parish priest, impartial and available for both parties? (He appeared twice in the witness stand for the prosecution.)

As is common for FACT members, Roy found himself pressured into giving up other roles in Sherborne particularly the Sherborne Food Bank that he had founded in 2011. When the Incumbent took over the running the Food Bank he pressured Linda, Roy’s wife, into resigning her post as administrator – neither of them were ever invited back in any capacity. The last four years became for Roy and Linda ‘a forty years in the wilderness’ search for an accepting home in the church and society, with only the Lord himself leading the way. All of this could have been avoided by a proper management by the diocese and its safe-guarding team that seemed only concerned to assess risks and observe from a distance. How has the present culture changed the attitude of church and society towards those accused!

Fortunately a group of trusted friends, both Christian and not, many of whom had reason to thank Roy for his ministry to them in situations good and bad, raised a considerable sum of money to support him and Linda (now his widow) and the barrister mentioned above, skilled in defending the falsely accused. This group attending the two trials he had to endure.

See over for an excerpt from Roy’s obituary.
FACTion - Vol 1.1 - Spring/Summer 2021

Obituary: Roy Catchpole: continued...

Roy Catchpole

From Roy’s Obituary:

It is tragic that Roy’s story will possibly be seen to end with a false allegation, but this last 6 year period does not define the man, nor is it where Roy’s story began. He was born and bred in Ipswich without the kind of oversight most church people would be used to: affectionate doting middle class parents we take for granted (instead anger, beatings and ‘you’ll end up in prison’ was a constant refrain). What education he had was amongst the lowest sets ‘stream C secondary modern, ‘woodwork and planting flowers in pots’ (ibid 138); so he left school without any qualifications, taking jobs as ‘labourer/shop assistant variously... at least 20 different employers’, according to his own account; but he was often just following his instincts for activity as by the age of 18 he was racking up a number of petty thefts that resulted in his arrest, trial and detention.

Although sentenced to Borstal training, he actually spent a good deal of it in adult prison. He gives a thorough, tortured, and hard-hitting account of the two years he spent (‘Key to Freedom’ 1974 published the month he was ordained at Leyton Parish Church). Mrs Renee Short’s description from the 1967 Report to the Labour government gives some idea what Borstal was like: ‘Ashford Remand Centre boys of school age were locked in their cells at 5 o’clock until 6.30am, with limited attempts at an educational programme/work schemes/skeleton medical staff, none of whom was trained in psychiatry. ... overcrowded (39 boys sharing three to a cell)... We were shocked by the degrading business of “slopping out”’. But Roy’s own remand was worse, first in the grim Wormwood Scrubs among hardened criminals, and later (as a punishment for escaping open borstal on the night he arrived) three months’ solitary confinement, including 15 days on bread and water, in Gloucester Prison. Here however he discovered that he could read, with understanding and profit, very academic writing, there being nothing else after thrillers available: apparently he waded through Descartes, Dante, Plato, Mill and even Shakespeare (latterly he was an enthusiastic amateur actor with the Sherborne Players). But it was through the bible (‘had to steal another copy as mine had been used too extensively for rolling tobacco for cigarettes’) that he became interested in the background to religion.

Later in his final spell in Rochester Borstal, he had to reckon with the chaplain who introduced him to what became his real ‘key’ to freedom, that Jesus loved him and wanted him to be His prisoner. He relates a moving illustration of how this affected him: ‘I looked at my hands... torn and hard with callouses, cracks and cuts from daily prison life... thinking “Jesus wants hands like this?”’ He might have added, hands that were always the means to his petty criminality. After a lifetime of ‘putting up a front, he had to come out in the open... ‘I laid my hands on the table, and said, “Jesus, if you want them they are yours.”... the chaplain... gave me time to clean up my face... I didn’t want the (other prisoners) to see me broken’ (ibid 117-8)

Afterwards, through the sympathetic ministry of the Anglican church, he found his way to ordination and ministry, initially in Chelmsford Diocese, later returning...
to Southwell where he had trained at St John's Nottingham. It was not until 2018 that under duress or facing injustice on his own account was formally diagnosed as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: this showed what he had been subject to through his trial and the subsequent failure of the church authorities to put the matter right. But the features of it went back to this period of incarceration: fear and indeed terror of physical violence, bullying, and the powers of authority damaged his ability to respond with his own courage. In church circles. His PTSD was always interpreted as behavioural because of the sort of character he had despite being a priest: roguish, clever, outspoken, sometimes hot-headed and far from the usual owlish picture of the sober Anglican priest. Yet he was a deeply sensitive pastor, with his own ingrained and haunted conscience, penitential, quick to change his feelings of anger to those of regret, and always the relentless drive of his determination to reach out to others, always willing to forgive a fault and change his view of people.

So it was the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, interviewing him as a candidate for theological training for which at that time he had no academic qualifications, and rather the opposite as someone with a criminal record, was impressed with these qualities as well as faith in his Risen Lord. After going over his record and, as a result of the interview, he observed: ‘don’t do yourself down, Roy: you already have the BA that counts, Born Again’. Yes we know that his relations with ecclesiastical authority were not always harmonious and he was to leave Southwell Diocese in anger without his licence owing to the breakdown of his relationship with his first wife. And his own account of it all often came across as influenced by his uncontrollable feelings repeated time and again... a key factor in the recognition of PTSD. But his B A came to his rescue time and time again.

In discussing his ordination training, he had to start again with first O Levels followed by some development at A Level for four years at a pre-ordination college to enable him to choose a modern theological college, a Licentiate of Theology at St John’s College, Nottingham, already being known for its radical evangelical and enterprising academic initiatives in the 1960-70’s from which he went onto gain a Masters in Mission and Ministry (Sheffield) and M Phil in Empirical Theology (Bangor), until finally gaining his Doctorate at the radical Eckhart University Seminary where the Christian focus was on Civil Rights, gender inequity, and the plight of Native Americans.

A man of inspirational and driving energy whose understanding of the gospel was exactly this passage in Matthew’s Gospel: ‘Then Christ the King will say to sheep at his right hand, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.” (Matthew 25:35)

Having removed to Dorset, and while on extended retreat at Hilfield Friary he got into conversation with another penitent staying there in prayer, no less a person than Rowan Williams then Archbishop of Canterbury.

Now married to Linda he found himself back on the path to priestly ministry that was always his defining motivation in life, and through the good offices of the Bishop of Salisbury, he proceeded in to the welcoming arms of the Sherborne parish and clergy. Thus he arrived at St Paul’s in the spring of 2006, having lost none of his passion for ministry, enthusiasm for young people, and returning to his first role, working closely with the needy, the marginalised, the troubled.

Among is many activities, he will be remembered in the North Dorset area as Founder of Sherborne Food Bank; unique locally because it delivers and instead of taking the unwanted, out-of-date foods, challenging the supermarkets and shoppers to contribute out of their own trolleys. His enthusiasm lead him to drive his magnificent second-hand Jag distributing left-over bread: what a sight for sore eyes when he opened the boot to those fallen on hard times. “For God’s sake, they’re starving”, was his cry.

Always full of the unexpected, Roy had recently put in for a house for duty rural parish. I have it from a senior member of the interviewing panel that long debate was held over two candidates; they chose, a former Archdeacon from Devon in preference to Roy: We wonder, what would the C of E be like if Roy had ever been an archdeacon...?

Roy’s blogs for FACT are still available at https://revdoccatch.wixsite.com/website-1

Outburry: Roy Catchpole: continued …
This is one of the hardest and saddest articles I’ve ever had to write.

It is with great sadness that barrister Barbara Hewson, has passed away after a long battle with pancreatic cancer. Barbara passed away on Saturday 9th January 2021.

Barbara is perhaps more recently remembered for her forthright challenges against “believe the victim” policies and her questioning of the whole Carl Beech story, often in the face of overwhelming hatred back towards her. Some of that hatred clearly caused her immense stress and highly likely contributed in some way to her illness.

Some individuals have blood on their hands as a result, in my view, however this article isn’t about recriminations. Some of Barbara’s more controversial behaviour in her later years may have been the result of the medical condition that she clearly had for a long time prior to formal diagnosis in late 2019 and early 2020. The punishment for some of those controversies was a draconian 2 year suspension from legal practice by the Bar Standards Board [BSB].

A draconian sentence which appears all the more stupid in light of Barbara’s illness and was only lifted on Thursday 7th January 2021 with the idiots online gloating at her illness. They do not deserve any more of my or anyone else’s time, however their contribution to her illness will be documented as part of this article, and have now shown their true colours.

The battle with BSB would have dire consequences for Barbara...

The more recent memories of Barbara’s challenges are, however, nothing compared to her previous cases.

Born in Ireland, Barbara Mary Hewson, achieved her law degree, becoming a lawyer mostly interested in “feminist” problems but not limited to such. Barbara had specialised in Court of Protection work, human rights, judicial review, and regulatory defence cases.

Reprinted from the blog “Spins vs Truth” with permission of the author, Simon Just, Kendal, Cumbria. @majorleak2017
Barbara was called to the bar and her first prominent cases were in the 1990s when she campaigned against court-ordered treatment of pregnant women, claiming that family courts were depriving women of fundamental rights to personal autonomy and to a fair trial.

Barbara was a founder-member of the Association of Women Barristers (AWB) in 1991, the same year she was elected to the Bar Council [ironically the over-seeing organisation ultimately responsible for the Bar Standards Board, more on them shortly] and stayed as a member of the Bar Council until 20xx. As Press Officer for the AWB, she became known for commenting on a range of issues concerning women and the law in national/international media both in print and on television/radio.

Barbara was a trustee of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service since 2007. She was also made an Honorary Fellow of the University of Westminster in 2012.

Barbara had long been opposed to state paternalism in the field of “medical decision-making”, and strongly supports patient autonomy, so much so that she had campaigned on various matters including legal work for Jodie and Mary, the Maltese conjoined twins in 2002, the home birth midwife Ann Kelly during 1997–2000 in Ireland.

In 2010, Barbara acted for the family of David Gray at the inquest into Mr Gray’s death following an overdose of Diamorphine, administered by locum German doctor Daniel Ubani, the inquest later ruling a verdict of gross negligence manslaughter. The result of which was 11 Recommendations to the Department of Health to improve out-of-hours GP services and Barbara was named by The Times as its “Lawyer of the Week” on 11 February 2010.

She was a supporter of abortion rights for women and of women’s rights in childbirth. She had argued that abortion should be removed from the criminal law under specific circumstances.

In 2013, however, Barbara fell foul of the CSA “brigade” and the “believe the victim” moral crusaders online.

Following an article published on “Spiked” on 8th May 2013 entitled “Yewtree is Destroying the Rule of Law”, the NSPCC’s Press Officer strongly urged her to remove or reword the article only a few hours after it was published.

Barbara’s article criticised the role of the NSPCC (which she called a “moral crusader”) and the Metropolitan Police in treating complainants as “victims” in the wake of the Savile scandal, and the proliferation of prosecutions of elderly defendants.

She had noted that the crimes of Stuart Hall (who had pleaded guilty to numerous charges of indecent assault) constituted misdemeanour offences, but still criminal

offences all the same, as opposed to more serious crimes like rape and murder.

She had proposed that there be a statute of limitations for criminal sex offences; that complainant anonymity be removed, and that the Age of Consent, which was raised by the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 1885 should be possibly changed back to the previous age of thirteen to try and assist in the modern problems of underage sex and teen pregnancies and she proposed a discussion surrounding that Age of Consent issue. Nothing more.

Rightly standing by her legally entitled opinions, Barbara rejected the NSPCC’s demand, citing Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The NSPCC then said it would take this to news desks. The NSPCC proceeded to attack Hewson publicly for her views, calling them “out-dated and simply ill-informed.”

Hewson then experienced a media storm. On the evening of 8 May 2013, her then barrister chambers “Hardwicke” issued a statement proclaiming they were “shocked” by her Yewtree article for spiked.

Hewson stood by her article, invoking Voltaire, she was entitled to express her personal views, however offensive they may have been to some. What the NSPCC effectively did was to invite a “pile-on” however.

Rather predictably, and incited by the NSPCC attacks, Barbara received many menacing messages via social media, but also many messages of support via e-mail and bloggers, concerned by Operation Yewtree and supporting the principle of free speech.

Brendan O’Neill, editor of Spiked Online, spoke out in Hewson’s defence on BBC’s Radio 5, saying “I published it because it’s a fantastic article.”

On 12 May 2013, the Irish Independent’s columnist Eilis O’Hanlon commented: “The vehemence of the reaction against Barbara Hewson demonstrates that she was certainly right to compare the public mood around this issue to a witch-hunt, since it is in the nature of witch-hunts to not only shout down opposition, but also to attack what you think someone said, or what you wish they’d said, rather than what they did say.”

The sociologist Frank Furedi claimed that Hewson had been morally lynched for expressing political opinions, and accused the NSPCC of moral blackmail.” Rod Liddle then criticised the NSPCC and Hardwicke in an article for The Spectator. Both the NSPCC and Hardwicke by NOT reading the article in question with an open mind had created a storm for Barbara which would last for years.

There was nothing irrational about the content of this article by Barbara for The Independent: time has proven her correct. This section from the Independent article stands out:
https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/the-cps-bends-over-backwards-to-help-complainants-in-child-sex-abuse-cases-its-kind-but-is-it-fair-8794716.html

and Barbara’s conclusions in the same article have the same resonance now as they did then, if not more so:

https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/the-cps-bends-over-backwards-to-help-complainants-in-child-sex-abuse-cases-its-kind-but-is-it-fair-8794716.html

As recently as this very month, Barbara was still being attacked online for the misconceptions of the 2013 Spiked article by a dedicated band of online abusive individuals.

As I said at the top of this article, those individuals now have more blood on their hands, they’d already tormented the former BBC presenter Simon Warr over false allegations made against him. They repeated the stunts against Barbara Hewson.

Both Warr and Hewson are now no longer with us [in body at least], both falling to the curse of the big C: cancer not the other big C: c*nts.

Although either C would be applicable as to the way in which both Hewson and Warr were wrongfully pilloried and both eventually succumbed to cancer, likely exasperated by the conduct of those online who couldn’t distinguish the difference between an opinion and a requirement.

It was a pattern however and later in 2013, another incident occurred when Barbara had attended a seminar entitled “Is Rape Different?”.

Her views had proved again controversial at the time, however in another article for Spiked her predictions have again been accurate: the article was entitled “Believe the Victim: A recipe for injustice” and 7 years on it’s very hard to argue again against Barbara’s opinion and conclusions.

Carl Beech has now come and gone, Barbara’s predictions on that score were accurate too.

“Believe the victim” is dead in the water [in its original form] despite the best efforts of Victims Commissioner Dame Vera Baird and the unelected quango of the College of Policing. The criminal justice system can’t risk another Beech fiasco, nor can it risk the other fiasco that the likes of Baird conveniently forget: the disclosure crisis, where evidence was withheld from the defence and/or deliberately manipulated to avoid the truth coming out. And for every false allegation or a false conviction of rape, the greater the damage done to legitimate victims of such crimes. That too is something Baird is seemingly missing.

Each wrongful conviction, each wrongful case taken to a court for it to collapse under the likes of the disclosure crisis issues and the more rotten the “Believe the victim” policies are shown to be. Those issues are not fixed by burying heads in sand like an ostrich and pretending the underlying policies aren’t an issue.

Barbara Hewson was right in 2013. Time has proven her to be right.

That is why those who tried to shout her down or to make out that her views were controversial or out-dated were the ones with the problems. Voices like Barbara’s should’ve been praised for daring to say what many thought.


In 2019, she attended many, if not all, of the days of the Carl Beech trial. Often providing from court material and information that the mainstream media and the likes of Mark Watts overlooked in their reporting.

Fortunately, Barbara had lived long enough, like Simon Warr, to see Beech jailed for 18 years for his own offences, both Barbara Hewson and Simon Warr were vindicated. Although that vindication didn’t prevent either of them from receiving online abuse from individuals on a mission against them.

Later in 2019, Barbara fell foul of the long running organised set of complaints against her to the Bar Standards Board by the same idiots who had attacked her online for months.

The Bar Standards Board initially rejecting the counter allegations, quelle surprise, that Barbara made and the BSB concentrated on one specific incident which, whilst Barbara regretted the incident in question, it was easy to see how she had resorted to such a defence tactic in the face of overwhelming and sustained pressure.

Pressure which likely added to her illness. Her suspension from practice for 2 years was over-kill as it singularly failed to even acknowledge the provocation and sustained provocation against her, such a “sentence” [more like a colon than a sentence] was also designed to stifle her freedom of expression and frankly, she wasn’t the same again afterwards.

It had all taken much of her fizz and sparkle away, perhaps more than she realised at the time.

The idiots had won via a gullible regulator unfit for purpose. The irony being that the judges were fellow barristers but who stifled much of the evidence and chose to adopt the “believe the victim” stances that have seen the criminal justice system get into so much trouble over the last decade. No wonder that Barbara felt that she was fighting everyone who didn’t agree with her, little wonder that she perhaps became a little too paranoid for a short time. Had the full picture been presented to BSB then perhaps, just perhaps, Barbara would’ve had a longer life. The reactions from the media etc certainly didn’t help, again, and another pile-on ensued.

Obituary: Barbara Hewson: continued...
The BSB learnt nothing from it all though. It was prepared to throw one single woman to the wolves and practically delighted in doing so. If the regulator for barristers can’t be fair and impartial what chance is there for the justice system as a whole?

Barbara was also a good friend to me personally and I sincerely hope vice-versa, even though we had never met in person, we regularly chatted online away from the public glare and occasionally on the phone, about issues of false allegations and the “players” involved and it came as a great shock when I was one of the first people she confided her medical diagnosis with some months ago. Not wishing her diagnosis to be made public, because of the attacks which she had received online, it was hard work to keep the news “quiet”. Hopefully you will now see why it was a necessity to keep that sort of news quiet.

Following a series of defamatory articles about Barbara in the Times and Daily Mail she had embarked on lengthy libel proceedings against both newspapers. The Daily Mail saw common sense and settled out of court, The Times however persisted in their defence [which now looks incredibly stupid] against a then dying woman and only settled shortly before Christmas 2020.

Think about that latter point for a minute, a national newspaper knew it was going to struggle to justify a specific article about Barbara but had persisted in defending it’s stance almost right to the point where Barbara passed away. That is how sick and twisted the Murdoch Empire can be.

Quite rightly, even in the face of a terminal illness, Barbara was not for backing down. She had stood her ground, like many times previously, and it is perhaps that stubbornness whilst it’s a brilliant way of dealing with legal matters which also contributed to her illness. Being strong and determined comes with a heavy price at times.

The stress of dealing with the press, the online shenanigans of what are no better than online terrorists, the knock-on effects of standing ground and perhaps Barbara going on an ill-advised offensive against the “terrorists” all adds up.

The latter resulting in the Bar Standards Board making a mockery of the Bar and acting as judge, jury and executioner [please pardon the last word] towards Barbara. Those who persisted in complaints against her now have their own consciences to answer to. They won’t be getting airtime from me, other than to report on legal developments against them.

Personally, I hope they have many restless and sleepless nights realising that they tortured a single woman and contributed without any doubt whatsoever to her untimely death.

Sooner or later, that was always going to be the case too – whether it was Barbara or someone else they were hounding – eventually blood would be spilt.

However, that’s not how we should remember Barbara Hewson.

Barbara was, almost, a sole voice of reason in a world of chaos, a world gone mad with the presumption of innocence being eroded to a point where the lunatics have taken over the asylum of the criminal justice system. Her piercing wit and directness should have been applauded not ridiculed and attacked as it was. Those who misinterpreted what she was saying are the problem not the solution.

We needed more [and even more so now] like Barbara who would cut through the bullshit with not just a scythe but a nuclear weapon and bring back some reality to the ever-twisted world in which we are now living.

Away from law, Barbara was a keen animal observer and adored sheep, hedgehogs and mainly horses – she was a keen horse rider away from the stresses of the bar.

On a personal level, the torment that I saw Barbara put through by trolls flabbergasted and infuriated me, however she was a true friend and a fighter throughout, I will sadly miss her acidic wit and charm especially in private conversations about wild animals such as hedgehogs and I will be forever grateful for her gift of a handmade mug with hedgehogs depicted on it.

I can only hope that her final resting place sees her surrounded by such lovable creatures and that she is finally at peace away from the cruelty which tormented her life in her later years.

Rest in peace, Barbara Mary Hewson. I will miss you as will many others.

Reprinted from the blog “Spins vs Truth” with permission of the author, Simon Just, Kendal, Cumbria. @majorleak2017
I was saddened to hear of the death of Lord William ‘Paddy’ Rossmore. He was a good man, kind and interesting, a modest intellectual, and quietly generous towards good causes. While he held the hereditary title of Lord, this was something he never mentioned, introducing himself as Paddy, while chatting to people and handing around plates of sandwiches.

It seems he was much more of a contributor than people probably realise. Not least, he founded the Coolmine Therapeutic Community for recovering drug addicts in 1973, and continued to be involved in its work throughout his lifetime. As well as this good work, the obituaries that I read in national newspapers omitted to mention his interest in Jungian psychology, the science of memory, and his writing on these subjects, plus his years of support given to the British False Memory Society (BFMS), and also to FACT.

I cannot claim to have known him well, having only met him on a handful of occasions at meetings arranged by FACT, but he asked for my view on drafts of papers he had written, and I came to appreciate his deeply thoughtful approach to the neglected problem of false allegations of sexual abuse, particularly in relation to ‘recovered memories’ of abuse.

He believed that Jungian theory provided important insights here, and referred to Jung’s concept of the unconscious mind as having evolved over generations of Homo sapiens but retaining primitive characteristics which have become the symbols of dreams and fantasies; these can be experienced in the waking mind as anxiety, fears, depression and a sense of gaps in childhood memories. Along with BFMS, Paddy was very concerned about the dangers of ‘recovered memory therapy’ giving rise to false memories and false allegations, causing lifelong family breakdown. He wrote that Jung ‘has pinpointed the risks of conducting psychotherapy on the basis of a too limited understanding of the unconscious, and a too limited understanding of the phenomenon of repression. What this danger has resulted in is the confusion and suffering caused by the widespread conduct in Western countries of the practice of recovered memory.’¹

He was a gentleman in the old-fashioned sense, but could spring surprises. I had no idea that he once had a relationship with the singer, Marianne Faithfull, and that (it is suggested in the press) her ex, Mick Jagger, was jealous of that. On one occasion he accompanied me to an important annual lecture at the University of Oxford, and the subject of this past relationship came up in conversation over dinner, but he made no fuss about it, and said how concerned he had been at that time about her welfare. He surprised me also by turning up for that formal lecture wearing red trousers. He was otherwise soberly dressed in a shirt and tie and a smart jacket. It occurred to me then that he had a sparky side to his personality. He emailed me afterwards though explaining that it was only the following day that he realised that he had accidentally, in the evening light, picked out the burgundy ones from his wardrobe instead of the intended brown ones. Ever the gentleman, he took the trouble to explain. Other obituaries are revealing about how multi-talented he was. As well as the above, he was also a painter and a photographer, with published books on Irish landscapes and architectural heritage.

People I’ve met via FACT and BFMS speak fondly of him. His contribution to raising awareness of how untrue allegations of abuse can in some cases be drawn out and perpetuated by psychotherapy will continue to be important. He will be remembered with gratitude and affection.

A day to bring attention to false accusations has been set aside on the 9th September. This date has been chosen to commemorate the Birthday of Simon Warr a great campaigner and member of the FACT committee until his death in early 2020.

Many organisations for the wrongly accused and convicted are taking part and each asking their members to undertake initiatives to highlight both the day and the cause. You are asked once again to write to your MP’s or direct to ministers. Perhaps you can highlight that maintaining innocence in the prison system should been seen as just that and individuals not labelled as deniers. We seek along with other groups to bring to the attention of the whole country the enormity of the problem and devastation it brings to families and future generations. Those who are found guilty or even accused or not the only ones to suffer. The courts are wrongly convicting not just a grandfather but a wife, children, close friends, and ex-work colleagues, all who will forever be shocked and grieve for the injustice and the permanent stain upon one’s character. It is the most dehumanising of all crimes and often individuals are convicted upon probability as opposed to evidence. It is time that a return to a justice system which required evidence beyond doubt and not a believe all and everything mentality and practice.

Let’s make this day useful and focus our attention to do something together each year on this day.
If you have ideas and want to contribute then email;

info@falselyaccusedday.org

Web https://falselyaccusedday.org
and
https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/falsely-accused-day-planning-tickets-158387823243

IN REMEMBRANCE

Dame Shirley Williams one of the breakaway group known as the Gang of Four who were founders of the Social Democratic Party. FACT pays tribute to her memory and recalls the work she did behind the scenes in the early part of this Century for those falsely accused. Although not known for her endeavours in this area to help members of FACT and those they represent, Shirley Williams worked behind the scenes to raise the profile of those falsely accused. She worked closely with Clare Curtis Thomas MP and Earl Howe and was much appreciated for her support during those early years leading up to the Select Committee Review into False Allegations.

WILLS AND INHERITANCE

It has come to our attention that from time to time some members need advice on making a will or receiving inheritance. This can be an area which needs careful handling especially when compensation claims can be lurking around the corner. FACT has been in contact with a firm who are considered excellent in this area and we would be happy to pass on their contact details if needed.
There is a belief among many behavioural psychologists that all behaviour, however good or bad, comes from good intentions. This might mean for example that if someone shows bullying behaviour, this comes from having happened to the individual, and their playing out the behaviour as an acceptable pattern. Thus the bullying behaviour, negative as it is perceived, comes from a place of trying to return the ‘bully’ to a nurturing, comfortable environment where such things were acceptable. The idea then is that this bullying behaviour is comparable to coercive control, gaslighting, psychological game-playing, emotional blackmail, criminal persuasion in terms of the effects of these phenomena having a core which is in fact wholesome: the desire to create nurturance in the individual of those around them.

There is another dominant truism at the moment: that we are changed by that which we see or hear. Social linguistics says that a person’s inner core locus can be influenced or changed by that which he or she hears in the childhood home, then as an adult on the television or on the internet, et cetera. There is an argument however over whether ‘human nature’ can be changed in this way, with many claiming there is no such thing as human nature at all. The social scientist Steven Pinker claimed in his book *The Blank Slate* that humans do indeed have an evolutionarily-determined human nature, and that moral messages we receive are in conflict with this rather eternal-feeling understanding. Others are more determined to believe that babies are born with no history or problematic capabilities, and that any antisocial behaviours are a result purely of what they have seen or heard while growing up.

This is essentially an extension of the nature/nurture debate: or, which is more influential, how we are brought up or our genetic inheritance? Genetics are something of a taboo subject right now, with social scientists often extrapolating to the supremacist aspects of the subject of eugenics too quickly, and so how a person is raised tends to take on the majority of blame for the person’s future behaviour. Other aspects have a part to play too, such as the relatively new discovery that the human brain isn’t fully developed to adult capability until the age of twenty five. That fact itself asks urgent questions about the age and nature of criminal responsibility - that being age ten in the UK. This evokes moving images of young lads being covered in soot as infant chimney sweeps, and beaten up for doing an incomplete job. The fact remains that if a child is told they are good, loved and well-behaved enough as they are growing, they are still not guaranteed to grow into a well-behaved adult, however much the psychologists might want them to.

There are also deep, eternal, blood-fused codes and messages in individuals which are far more embedded than received, transmitted messages (as comforting as those can be). The use of ‘positive’ language against these deeply-embedded instincts is like warriors with spears coming up against bayonets in the Boer War: worthy and useful but more dependant on the primacy on the dominance of the visible than it probably should be. Bad behaviour can be modified, but it can’t, and arguably shouldn’t, be totally expunged. Bad behaviour, or behaviour which is seen as bad, is part of being human. These theories have been around for much of the post-Freudian, post-war era, and since the millennium their dominance has accelerated in society. Put simply, while Sigmund Freud thought pathological human behaviour came from various sexual psychoses, the post-war behavioural psychologists thought it came from problems with upbringing. This theory fitted in nicely with increasingly ubiquitous equal rights and identity politics, as the all-wise hand of social services and the priority of protecting the rights of all minorities took precedence in the democratic West.

The increasing prevalence of issues such as societal ADHD, undiagnosed autism-spectrum conditions and apparently rapidly growing Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD; or simply ‘being an honest rebel’ as many who have it will hold) have helped put most well-meaning, priority ‘nurture’ positions in question. While some nice,
upper middle-class young men from nice, nurturing homes might be under the influence of negative cyclical behaviours, they appear to be equally likely simply to have a long dormant gene pop up in their present psyche that makes them do bizarre things. No amount of telling them that they are innately good people who can be the change they want to see, or indeed that tomorrow is the first day of the rest of their lives, is going to help much in rehabilitating them for behaviours which might have seemed to them perfectly natural, if not necessarily societally acceptable; particularly not in a society that seems obsessed with constantly reframing the context of what societally acceptable is (which is more often than not dependant on market forces or changing fashions).

There is a powerful desire to intellectually control the unpredictability of the natural human, and each societal generation seems to try to apply this manipulative pressure from the top down. Beyond all these absolutist, divisionist nature/nurture stances, a person is a hundred-trillion celled structure borne of myriad psychological, evolutionary and cosmological influences. Whether the motivational words are ‘build back better’, ‘give peace a chance’ or ‘the only bars are in the mind’, they can only ever really be a slippery sticking plaster randomly slapped on to the shifting sands of far more ancient truths.

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Twitter: a source of help

For many this online social network has provided vital information and contacts. They include Justice groups, professionals, law and legal items. Individual experiences and links to live reports etc. FACT has a twitter account and it may help if individuals set up one using a pseudonym for privacy.

To get you started once you have a person profile under an alternative name which means something to you, twitter for @factukorg and follow the other tweeters there.
Alexandra Wilson was a teenager when her dear family friend Ayo was stabbed on his way home from football. Ayo’s death changed Alexandra. She felt compelled to enter the legal profession in search of answers.

As a junior criminal and family law barrister, Alexandra finds herself navigating a world and a set of rules designed by a privileged few. A world in which fellow barristers sigh with relief when a racist judge retires: ‘I’ve got a black kid today and he would have had no hope’.

Alexandra was called to the Bar in 2018 and has her whole career ahead of her. By publishing her debut book, In Black and White, she bravely is putting her head above the parapet and calling out the profession’s prejudices – we hope that the book will make a change, but past history has shown that the judiciary is slow to change.

In her book, Alexandra re-creates the tense courtroom scenes, the heart-breaking meetings with teenage clients, and the moments of frustration and triumph that make up a young barrister’s life.

Alexandra shows us how it feels to defend someone who hates the colour of your skin, or someone you suspect is guilty. We see what it is like for children coerced into county line drug deals and the damage that can be caused when we criminalise teenagers.

Alexandra’s account of what she has witnessed as a young mixed-race barrister is in equal parts shocking, compelling, confounding, and powerful.

I leave the last word to the Secret Barrister

“An absolute triumph; a compelling and courageous memoir forcing the legal profession to confront uncomfortable truths about race and class. Alexandra Wilson is a bold and vital voice. This is a book that urgently needs to be read by everyone inside, and outside, the justice system.”

'I glanced around the courtroom, quickly at first and then repeated it. Slower this time, taking in the details of everyone's faces. I began to play the game I'd played my whole life: spot the black person. Of course, I wish it didn't matter what I looked like or where I came from, but it was obvious that no one there looked like me.'
‘The High Court is made up of; the Queen’s Bench Division, Family Division and Chancery Division. The High Court has appellate jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters. Each division of the court has different jurisdictions, with the Queen’s Bench Division being the biggest.’

Publisher: Independently published in Nov. 2020 by Easyjail
Available via Amazon: Paperback & Kindle: £4.99

This is a concise, easy to read short book that gives, as the title states, ‘A Summary of The English Legal System. It is privately published by Easyjail.co.uk and available on Amazon.co.uk. The Easyjail organisation aims to provide, ‘discrete and dependable consulting and training for all aspects of a person’s journey through the justice system.’

This book is aimed at people who are aware of the judicial system, but whose knowledge of the complexities English legal system is limited. Therefore, the book is not written for those who are studying law, but for the ordinary person who may one day, or who already are, caught up in the English legal system.

The book begins by looking at what is ‘Law’, how it is formed and how it is kept. It then goes onto the different Court systems, Appeals, Judicial Reviews, Tribunals, Mediation, Judges and Magistrates. It explains very clearly, and does not assume that everyone is from England, hence some people may find statements such as ‘membership of Parliament is composed of members of different political parties, and even independents’ too obvious, but by starting at such a low base of understanding, this book gives everyone the opportunity to gain a basic understanding of the English legal system.

For me there is one aspect I think is missing, and that is an appendix with a vocabulary of terms used in the book. For example, the term ‘Tort’ is specific to the legal profession and although it is defined on page three, when you come across it again in the text, (it appears four other times) it would be helpful to have an easily accessible reminder of its meaning.

Despite my own minor criticism, I would recommend anybody who becomes entangled with the judiciary to own and read a copy, so that they are aware of the legal terms used and the legal system itself.
Over the last 30 years, support groups for those accused of false accusations have worked tirelessly to provide advice and a shoulder for victims of unfounded allegations. The support groups include FASO, FACT, Accused.me and Safari. Whilst each group supports a wide range of different people and accusation, all the groups have a similar will to witness change to the British Legal System to better protect victims of false allegations and wrongful convictions.

Unfounded brings together the wide range of Groups that support victims of false allegations, to speak as one voice in the fight for justice. The Alliance is committed to working together to raise awareness and influence policy to improve services to victims of unfounded allegations and miscarriages of justice.

Website: www.unfounded.org.uk

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Email articles to: editor@faction.news

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Richard Webster’s Website

A reminder from FACT that this very important website is still online

Very sadly, Richard died in June 2011, after suffering heart failure during the night.

Richard researched and wrote about many of the issues central to FACT’s work. He was very farsighted and decades ahead in his realisation of the truth. He was also involved with FACT in the early days. His books ‘The Great Children's Home Panic’ (1998) and ‘The Secret of Bryn Estyn’ (2005) are directly related to FACT and the devastating effect of false allegations on its members.

Richard’s friends would like to ensure that he is properly remembered and they want his work to remain readily available for others to read, hence the continuation of his website:

www.richardwebster.org
Also Supporting Victims of False Allegations

We are happy to introduce other organisations, where you may find additional information / support:

B.F.M.S. - British False Memory Association - www.bfms.org.uk
False memory: when a person is convinced a memory is true when it is not. Clinical evidence suggests it is more widespread than had previously been appreciated. Contact: Kevin Felstead - 0161 285 2583

SAFARI provide powerful and positive information to those who are in a position to make necessary changes in the UK's investigative and judicial systems, to those who have been affected by false accusations and to those who have suffered from being pressurised into making false accusations.

A voluntary organisation that offers clear information, practical advice, and emotional support to anyone affected by false allegations of abuse. Contact - Margaret - 0844 335 1992

F.A.H.S.A - Falsely Accused of Historic Sex Abuse - http://www.falselyaccusedhsa.co.uk
My husband and I assumed that the fundamental principle of justice - innocent until proven guilty - was enshrined in British Law; our experience taught us otherwise.

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Helpline: 0843 289 2016

FACT, 83 Ducie Street, Manchester, M1 2JQ