

## Investigators Note

### Telephone Conversation between Detective Inspector Graeme Parker and Joanne McCarthy.

Date: 14 April 2011

Time : 2pm

On Friday 8 April 2011, I was contacted by Ms Joanne McCarthy, journalist from the Newcastle Herald. She told me she was the person responsible for initiating the investigation into allegations against the Catholic Church to which she believed I was currently in charge. She stated she wished to discuss this matter with me. I told her I had only just taken carriage of the matter and that it was my intention to familiarise myself with the Investigation Plan over the weekend. I agreed to call her on Monday, however, this did not eventuate.

On Thursday 14 April 2011, I received another phone call from Ms McCarthy. She again stated her position as an involved person in an attempt to justify her need to be included in information dissemination about this matter.

I would state at this point that my assessment of her position is more one similar to that of an 'Early Complaint' witness, and therefore not subject to the requirements of the 'Charter of Victim Rights'. I also believe that even if she genuinely felt she was a 'victim' in the matter, she has a clear 'conflict' between her personal position and the requirements of her job. I believe she would not hesitate to place her job interests before those of this investigation or any of the other victims involved.

At the beginning of the conversation, Ms McCarthy stated her intention to publish a story in the NH regarding police ineffectiveness in the investigation of this matter. She made it quite clear that her issue was not with me, but rather with the previous management of the matter. I told her that, as I had only just taken over the matter, I was not in position to comment on this area. I made it clear that I was not across the full scope of the investigation, but that I was able to speak with her in general terms about the direction the investigation was taking. She asked me the investigations current position and I told her that investigators had re-established relations with the victims and that some victim/witnesses would need have further statements taken from them.

About this point, she started to supply her analysis of the previous 12 months of the investigation. She was extremely critical of the both the progress and management of the investigation. She cited, in her opinion, a general lack of progress and the fact that several officers associated with investigation were now off on long term sick report. She stated that it was quite clear to her, through several discussions with officer associated with this investigation, that none of them had the interest or desire to pursue this matter with the vigour required.

She told me that she had met with DCI Taylor, DSS Quinn, DS Steele and a Barrister she had engaged to discuss this investigation. On completion of the meeting both the barrister and her had separately concluded two of the officers would be of 'no use whatsoever' in the further investigation of this matter (she did not identify to which officers she referred).

She also related the fact that she believed that she had been 'sonded out' on several occasions, by investigators, to see where she would open to simply dropping that matter on the grounds it was either too hard or simply unwinnable. I told her that I was unaware of any such issue.

She spoke at length about Section 316, which I too to mean Section 316, Crimes Act of 1900, Conceal Serious Offence. She made it clear that she had taken advice from legal advice in this area and was aware of the difficulties of pursuing this indictment, given the fact that the original statements obtained by the church, from the two girls, did not disclose a 'serious offence'.

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She believed that rigorous investigation by a skilled senior investigator would disclose far greater improprieties allowing the standards for 316 to be met. She felt with their background in these types of matters either DCI Fox or DSC McLeod would have been a suitable candidates.

At this point she asked if I was aware of how the matter had come to police notice. I told her I was not. She told me of <sup>AL</sup> disclosure to her and how she first came to speak with DSC Scott McLeod about the matter including his passion to pursue the matter. She told me that DI Waddell was strongly opposed to McLeod (or Lake Mac LAC) following up on the complaint, and that Waddell had "chucked a wobble" over the matter to get it transferred to Newcastle. I again indicated that I was not aware of any of the issues she was raising.

She told me that she understood that and while she was not critical of me, at this point, it was her intention to drop a bucket on the Police over the matter. She stated that it was wrong that the senior investigator in the area was not allowed to run the investigation.

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She then told me that it may be in the interest of the investigation for me to speak with an ex-police officer who was recently elected as the member for Dubbo. When I enquired who and why, she told me Troy Grant, because he had already investigated Vince Ryan during his service as a police officer. She believed he had important information that would benefit the investigation. When I enquired as to what that may be she simply indicated that I should contact Mr Grant. She stated that she had already spoken with him and that he was only too willing to assist, if requested.

At some point in the conversation, we discussed the position of the victim AL whom she openly stated was a 'friend'. She told me that over a number of conversations/meeting she had gained AL trust and as such was the catalyst for AL disclosure. She was critical of D/Sgt Steel's involvement with AL. She claimed most of the issues arising between Steel and AL were due to Steel's poor people skills and a genuine lack of interest and empathy for the investigation and the victim.

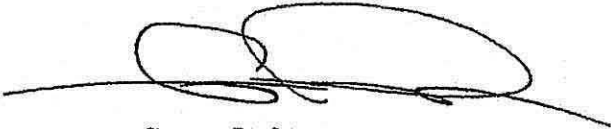
She then questioned on what grounds D/Sgt Little would need to speak with AL again. I told her that investigator's had their reasons for wishing to clarify certain areas, and that I would not elaborate on this area. She stated she had no desire to know these reasons, but acknowledged AL could be difficult to deal with and even uncooperative. She did, however, feel that an experienced investigator should be easily able to overcome these road blocks, which to date, she felt had not occurred. She felt that AL would be more accommodating towards testifying if she were part of a multiple faceted prosecution, similar to a class action.

While these notes are accurate, they are not intended to be an exact record of every aspect of what was a very long telephone conversation. That said, the recorded areas are accurate and are areas I felt should be documented for future reference.

Although my knowledge of this matter, at this time, is very limited, it was quite transparent from this conversation, that someone/s within this organisation is 'leaking' discrete/classified information and investigative strategies to Ms McCarthy. Given her position as a journalist intent on crusading this issue with little or no regard for either the investigation or those involved in it, it is hard to envisage how this can be anything other than detrimental to a successful outcome. She seems intent on having Detective Chief Inspector Fox given carriage of the matter for a purpose that is not clear to the author at this point. Without prior knowledge of DCI Fox relationship with Ms McCarthy, I can only speculate as to why this would be the case.

I will say, however, that during the conversation I formed the opinion that DCI Fox and or DSC McLeod are the most likely source/s of Ms McCarthy's

information. Further, from her own admissions, DCI Fox has spoken with her regarding this matter despite being under direction not to do so. It is difficult to say why DCI Fox would wish to be in charge of this investigation given that most experienced investigators would quickly identify it as one which would fall into the category of 'undesirable'. The likelihood of obtaining an outcome satisfactory to all, or for that matter any, of the parties involved is highly unlikely. By nature the investigation will, indeed already has, generate a large amount of media attention. Given the problematic nature of historic sexual assault investigations involving the Catholic Church, there is a better than average chance the investigation will attract adverse comments from the media. Given this fact, any investigator who deliberately sets about systematically derailing another's investigation, for whatever reason, should be subject to censure.



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