

TRANSCRIPT

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the handling of child abuse by religious and other organisations

Melbourne — 15 March 2013

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Witnesses

Mr G. Doyle, and

Mrs M. Doyle.

The CHAIR — Good morning. On behalf of the committee, I welcome Mr Gary Doyle and Mrs Mary Doyle, and thank you for your willingness to appear before this hearing. All evidence taken by this committee is taken under the provisions of the Parliamentary Committees Act, attracts parliamentary privilege and is protected from judicial review. Any comments made outside the precincts of the hearings are not protected by parliamentary privilege. This hearing today is being recorded, and you will be provided with a proof version of the transcript. Following your presentation committee members will ask questions relating to both the submission that you have provided to us and the evidence we will hear from you today. Again, thank you for being before us this morning.

Mr DOYLE — Thank you. My name is Gary Norman Doyle. I am 62 years old. I am speaking about the criminal sexual assault that was inflicted on me during my time at St Augustine's, Geelong. St Augustine's was run by the Catholic Christian Brothers. I was sent to Geelong in 1959–60, when I was 12. I was there for four years. From 1959 to 1961 I was repeatedly physically and sexually assaulted by **[In accordance with the procedures observed by Parliamentary Committees when dealing with witnesses, as stated in the Guidelines for the Rights and Responsibilities of Witnesses, a section has been expunged from this place in the transcript – future reference to 'text expunged']** too many times to count. Another boy my age, **[text expunged, see above]** was also dreadfully assaulted; he was assaulted first. **[text expunged, see above]**.

No action was ever taken by the Christian Brothers or by the Catholic Church to prevent this happening. As far as I know **[text expunged, see above]** actions were never questioned by the authorities during his time at St Augustine's. I believe **[text expunged, see above]** was questioned by police in 2000. To my knowledge he still lives in Geelong. The Christian Brothers have paid me \$15 000 in so-called compensation. This is a joke. I want to make sure what happened to me and others can never happen to any child again — all that is a furphy — and that authorities such as the Christian Brothers and the Catholic Church are brought to justice. During a conversation I had with Archbishop Pell two years ago he stated that the Christian Brothers were not part of the Catholic Church. To this day I still believe they are.

The abuse I suffered at the hands of the Christian Brothers has caused loss of memory, continued psychological trauma and damaged my back and spine from being repeatedly beaten **[text expunged, see above]** with a piece of wood 4 inches wide by 1 inch thick with a handle. He would take a run-up and hit me as I was lying on the bed, naked from the waist down. If you have never had it happen, do not wish for it. There is damage to my internal bowel organs from the sexual assault. I have evidence to support these allegations, should the inquiry wish to pursue these matters. I have signed this Gary Doyle, evidence on 19 September 2012.

The CHAIR — Thank you very much, Gary, for sharing your story with us. Mary, is there anything you would like to comment on or say to the committee at this point?

Mrs DOYLE — Just briefly, Gary's abuse has affected our family, and in a word — I am sure this inquiry has heard it a thousand times, but it is the only word that is appropriate — we just live in a continuing nightmare.

The CHAIR — Gary, there are a couple of things I want to ask of you in relation to your submission. You said the Christian Brothers paid you a sum of \$15 000 and that you wanted the Christian Brothers and the Catholic Church to be brought to justice. Is there anything else you feel victims need or deserve in relation to your experience?

Mr DOYLE — **[text expunged, see above]** I think, should be charged and locked up. I know he is ancient in age, but that does not change that I was abused so long ago when I was only a child. He did not take into any account how big I was; it was what effect he could get by abusing me and assaulting me.

The CHAIR — So that is part of the justice that you think is needed?

Mr DOYLE — If you are going to have justice, he should be locked up and the key chucked away forever. I would like to be notified by the church that they do know and hear me now, because I have contacted the orders, the Catholics and the Christian Brothers, and they state there will not be any oncoming correspondence to me about that.

The CHAIR — You have just made some allegations in relation to a member of the Christian Brothers, and as Chair I formally advise you and members of the media and public gallery that pending a review and

publication of the Hansard transcript, all reporting of the evidence will be suppressed pending further notice and order of the committee. That is in relation to the name that you have given.

Mr DOYLE — I do apologise.

The CHAIR — That is okay; so long as you understand. I am going to ask Mr McGuire now to ask a question of you, Gary.

Mr McGuire — Thank you, Gary. Thank you, Mary, for coming along as well, and Gary for having the fortitude to testify today. Can I get some detail on one of the key points that you have made today. Can we get as much detail on your recollection of your conversation with Archbishop Pell that you say was two years ago, when he stated that the Christian Brothers were not part of the Catholic Church. Can you actually say where and when that happened and what was the context of that conversation?

Mr DOYLE — I actually made the phone call to his office, and you are not more surprised than I am that he actually answered me, because I did not think he would.

Mr McGuire — Where was he at this stage?

Mr DOYLE — He was in Melbourne, and I rang him at the head office of the Catholic Church. He took the call as a normal call, and he spoke straightforwardly to me. When he advised me that the Christian Brothers were not any part of the Catholic order, it made me wonder why he kept calling them Catholic Christian Brothers in speeches he had made previously and further on. If they are not Catholics, why call them Catholics?

Mr McGuire — How did you respond when he said that? What was your response?

Mr DOYLE — I said, ‘You’re joking’. I said, ‘I wasn’t asked if I wanted to be baptised as a Catholic. I had no say in that’.

Mr McGuire — The point I am making is that your claim to the committee is that Archbishop Pell two years ago said that the Christian Brothers were not part of the Catholic Church. I am asking you: when he said that to you, as you are alleging, what did you say in response to that?

Mr DOYLE — I said, ‘I don’t believe what I’ve just heard you say to me, because I was brought up as a Catholic’.

Mr McGuire — What do you think his motive was in saying that to you?

Mr DOYLE — I would love to know what his motive was, and then I could get the Tattsлото numbers!

Mr McGuire — I am trying to get a bit more on the record of the detail of the conversation, as best you can remember.

Mr DOYLE — On the way I thought?

Mr McGuire — Yes. What was actually said? What did you say, what did he say and how did you respond?

Mr DOYLE — We were talking and it came around to the Christian Brothers, and I said, ‘I was abused by a Catholic Christian Brother’. I gave him his name, and he said, ‘We don’t have any Christian Brothers who are Catholics’. He said that they were not part of the church and that I would have to speak to their head office, and the head office of the Christian Brothers is in Carlton.

Mr McGuire — Did you take any notes at the time? Do you have anything that can give us the time and the date? Is there anything you can connect it up to just to check it?

Mr DOYLE — We may have it in letter form in something we sent out.

Mr McGuire — Mrs Doyle, do you want to make a contribution? Do you have it in a letter?

Mrs DOYLE — I am trying to remind Gary. Gary did write to a lot of people around that time because he was really upset. He may have further details. There is so much paperwork and correspondence that we have. If we go through it, it may have been mentioned in a letter that he wrote to a parliamentarian or a politician.

Mr DOYLE — I was going to go to the paper.

Mrs DOYLE — We would have to go through it. I cannot recall off the top of my head, because I think it was more than two years ago.

Mr McGUIRE — Would you be able to provide that to the committee?

Mrs DOYLE — I can certainly go through all the paperwork that we have at home.

Mr McGUIRE — I want to make sure that it was George Pell who you spoke to. Are you 100 per cent on that?

Mr DOYLE — Yes. There is only one George Pell, worse luck.

Mr McGUIRE — That is all right. We have established that you are saying it was George Pell, and we just want to make sure what was the actual conversation, what was the detail of that and when that occurred, and any notes you have or anything that can verify what you are saying.

Mr DOYLE — I was angry that something had happened to me for two solid years — being abused sexually and physically. If you can remember two years, you would know all about it.

Mrs DOYLE — It was more than two years.

Mr McGUIRE — Did he refer you then to the Christian Brothers at Treacy College? What happened?

Mr DOYLE — He said, ‘Goodbye, and don’t go and see anybody else’. The only person he asked me to go and see was John Baillieu.

The CHAIR — Mary, do you want to say something? You were shaking your head then.

Mrs DOYLE — It was when Archbishop Pell was archbishop of Melbourne, so it was more than two years ago. Gary did make contact with the Catholic Church earlier than that. He did go through the professional standards Towards Healing program. He was interviewed — I felt more like he was interrogated — by two gentlemen in Carlton. They produced a report for the church which stated that because of lack of corroboration and lack of further evidence it would go no further. They sent him for a psychiatric assessment with a Dr Kornan, who stated that Gary did certainly show signs of post-traumatic stress and that he was very reliable in his recollection, but then so was the person who Gary had claimed had committed the assault. That was sort of left at that. On psychiatric advice Gary let it go. He was very unwell because he suffered a workplace injury, with physical and mental health issues combined with the sexual assault all mixed in together. He let it go for about 12 months, maybe more; then he contacted the Christian Brothers separately. I think that was about the time when he spoke to Archbishop Pell, but I really cannot recall.

The CHAIR — Thank you for that clarification. He did indicate that he was speaking to quite a number of people at that time.

Mrs COOTE — Thank you very much indeed for clearing that up; I was going to try to tease that out as well. Could I ask about the \$15 000? In the process you just outlined, Mary and Gary, when you went to — was it Towards Healing or the Melbourne Response that you were involved with? Do you remember?

Mr DOYLE — I saw professional standards, Towards Healing. I had 20 sessions with CASA, and there were a few other people I saw in between. They were supposed to be health workers.

Mrs COOTE — Is it as a result of that process that you believe you got the \$15 000? Did they make you sign any release or agreement that you would not talk about it?

Mr DOYLE — We did not know it was a release. I have an older brother who is now dead. His name was Peter. He was sexually assaulted by the same set of people who assaulted me in the orphanage. He was assaulted twice and got \$20 000. I cannot see why when I had been assaulted for two years I only got \$15 000.

Mrs COOTE — Did he go through the same process? Did he go through Towards Healing?

Mr DOYLE — I don't know.

Mrs COOTE — You don't know.

Mr DOYLE — I have seen his letter, I have seen his ward file, but I have not seen anything else.

Mrs COOTE — Can I just go back? You did sign a form when you got the \$15 000 to say you would not bring it up again, or you would not try to go back to them again and get more money? They did not tell you not to talk about it?

Mr DOYLE — They told me not to talk about it.

Mrs COOTE — They told you not to talk about it.

Mr DOYLE — But it took me a long time to sign that piece of paper that day. It was only under advisement from a person who was supposed to be a Catholic, but he was on the other side, and he ended up talking me into it. I cannot give his name because of what we said before.

Mrs COOTE — Sorry, Mary, did you want to add something?

Mrs DOYLE — If I could just clarify that. When Gary contacted the Christian Brothers, it was a number of years after letting the Towards Healing program go. He was not directed to the Christian Brothers in any way; something had triggered his feelings about it, and it was just persistent phone calls and he got through to the head Christian Brother, and that is how that started.

Mrs COOTE — And to George Pell, which was amazing.

Mrs DOYLE — That was a few years prior.

Mrs COOTE — It was really amazing.

Mrs DOYLE — The head of the Christian Brothers at that time rang him back and gave Gary's name to a mediator. That is how that process started. Gary had a couple of discussions over the phone with the mediator and we went out to see them at Parkville. They offered some compensation, but only if Gary would withdraw the name of the Christian Brother. We went away for a couple of days. The mediator rang and again suggested quite strongly that they would offer some more compensation if he withdrew that. So he withdrew the name, and they offered some compensation, and we did sign a release.

Mrs COOTE — Thank you very much indeed. Thank you, Gary.

Ms HALFPENNY — When you said that they asked that you withdraw the name, what does that mean — never say it again? What did it actually do?

Mr DOYLE — That is what they expected me to say. But just recently, in the last two or three years, I have been advised by other people — we have legal centres around our way; we have Fitzroy, we have Preston. They have said, 'We would like to check through your document and see what rights you have and what rights you do not have'. At the moment we think we might have rights to bring it up, but until she tells me in black and white I cannot do a thing.

Ms HALFPENNY — When you went through the first Towards Healing process and they said there was no corroboration, do you know what sort of investigation they did? Did they go and talk to anybody who had been at St Augustine's that you knew of?

Mr DOYLE — I think the only person they might have spoken to was [text expunged, see page 2] — the Christian Brother — and me.

Ms HALFPENNY — They did not speak to anybody else who was around at the time or who might have known something?

Mr DOYLE — I did not speak to the police. After I remembered — because once I got out of the orphanage I did not remember all of what had happened to me until I started having flashbacks — I went to see a doctor, a psychiatrist, and he got it out of me and said I was suffering trauma from the abuse.

Mr O'BRIEN — Thank you, Gary. I was just going to pick up something from Mr McGuire's questioning about the conversation with Archbishop Pell, as he then was. May he have used words — and I am not saying he did, but it is something from other evidence — to the effect that the Christian Brothers were a separate organisation to the Melbourne Archdiocese?

Mr DOYLE — That's right, yes.

Mr O'BRIEN — We have had evidence from people who understand the Catholic Church, but we have not necessarily heard from the church hierarchy on this, that the church operates under different entities, which means that the archdioceses may be separate to the different — —

Mr DOYLE — That's right.

Mr O'BRIEN — So would that sort of thing explain to you — —

Mr DOYLE — No, I knew that they were at a different diocese because Melbourne is Melbourne and the Christian Brothers are out of Carlton, but they also sent them to Ballarat, to St Patrick's orphanage up there.

Mr O'BRIEN — It is very hard to recall, and we have not got Archbishop Pell here. I am just trying to ascertain maybe what he said. It is hard to recall and does not necessarily take us that far, but do you think he may have said that rather than said it is not part of the Catholic Church, or do you think he said — —

Mr DOYLE — No, he definitely said to me, 'They are not part of the Catholic Church. They are Christian Brothers. There is a difference. Look it up in a book'.

Mr O'BRIEN — That's fine. The second thing I would like to ask you about is you mentioned that there was evidence to support the allegations you have made that you have suffered losses at the hands of the Christian Brothers, including loss of memory, psychological trauma, damage to your back and spine and then damage to your internal bowel organs from sexual assault. Are you happy to provide that evidence to the inquiry? Do you have it available?

Mr DOYLE — Without saying yes that I will get it for them, I would have to speak first to the doctor who has got the X-rays. When I saw the X-ray I asked him why it was like it was. He said, 'That would have to happen with continual abuse' — the curve in my anus. I was not going to argue with him, because who would argue with a guy who has gone to medical school? The [inaudible] said something to him too, but what he actually said to him I cannot tell you. But when I asked him he said, 'That is most likely from the abuse that you copped'.

Mr O'BRIEN — It is a matter for you, but we are happy to receive that further evidence if it helps you support — —

Mr DOYLE — I have seen it. It is not going to worry me anymore. If I can produce it, I will.

Mr O'BRIEN — You do not have to. It is fine, and thank you for coming with your evidence today.

The CHAIR — Thank you, Gary. Thank you, Mary. On behalf of the committee I thank you both very much for appearing before us this morning. It has been appreciated, and your evidence has been most helpful. Thank you again.

Witnesses withdrew.