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TEENAGER

At [REDACTED] [REDACTED]s

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EMPLOYMENT

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] R [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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supermarkets, carwash attendant and cooking at McDonalds. This was always to fund my addictions. Till this day I have been living from pay day to pay day. At the age of 14 or 15 I had a TAB phone account and was a regular at my local pub in Brighton.

My High School Reports from years 9 and 10 [REDACTED] show that I was a bright student but lacked the motivation and couldn't complete the work, which led to me not completing my year 10 certificate. On reflection, I have no doubt that the abuse that I experienced as a boy had a direct impact on my inability to apply myself in school. At age 16, I attempted suicide, and was then referred to a psychiatrist. At no point did I disclose the abuse and as a result, the psychiatrist thought that my gambling, smoking and drinking were all signs of me acting out.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] By the age of 18, I realised that I wasn't handling my money well and drinking a lot and looked to the military lifestyle to provide some discipline before I totally ruined my life.

As a teenager I never spoke of the abuse I experienced as a child as I didn't understand what I had experienced and was left wondering why I was acting this way. I guess it hadn't entered my mind because I had repressed these memories by heavily drinking alcohol and feelings of guilt that it was my fault and choice to be acting this way.

EMPLOYMENT

I had a few menial jobs after I left high school, but it wasn't until I joined the Navy in 1990 that I found that I had an aptitude for particular Mathematics, Physics and logical fault finding tasks. I was considered highly intelligent and for the first time in my life and I was understanding the subject matter. I served in the first Gulf War and received training as a multi-skilled trades engineer specialising in Electrical Supply and Distribution as well as Platform Systems [REDACTED]. Throughout this time, I was repressing the memories of my abuse by continuing to drink heavily. When I was out to sea with the Navy I wouldn't drink, but as soon as I was back on land and left to my own devices, I would go back to the alcohol. The Navy culture of "work hard, play hard" at the time suited me and disguised any real issues.

At age 26, I decided to leave the military and pursue academics. I tried a Communications course at RMIT as well as a highly priced Computer Programming course with Computer Power Training

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Institute, but couldn't stay motivated and consequently dropped out. I then took on a job with Xerox as a Photocopier Technician, which I loved and was regarded highly by my peers and supervisors

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

In 1998, the Navy began writing to me asking that I consider re-joining as they were experiencing significant shortfalls of experienced sailors with my expertise [REDACTED]. As I felt that I could not control my addictive nature outside of the military and was unable to focus on academics, I decided to return to the Navy, at least I was guaranteed a roof over my head and three meals a day.

I continued where I left off and exceeded in some areas, but found I still couldn't complete some simple tasks. My alcohol consumption increased [REDACTED]. After 18 months of training, I was denied a security clearance to work as an Electronic Warfare Linguist due to my past addictive history. I then retrained as a Naval Writer so as to spend more time on shore with my young family and I received several awards for my work up until my marriage breakdown in 2007 [REDACTED]. At this stage I returned to my passion of Engineering and was retrained as an Electronics Technician, which would mean more time at sea, away from my vices.

[REDACTED] 2010, I was referred to a [REDACTED] for an assessment of my suitability for retention after receiving a positive drug test [REDACTED]. Although I showed talent in engineering and communications, I lost my job with the Navy in 2010. I was broke and homeless until the Department of Veterans Affairs provided me with financial support due to surgeries post Navy. Once again, I believe that the behavioural issues that I displayed whilst a sailor for the Navy can be directly attributed to the abuse that I suffered at a young age.

FAMILY

I have avoided close relationships throughout my life because I believed that my behavioural issues would only bring my loved ones down with me. I saw myself as poison.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] From the beginning of our relationship I informed my wife of my addictive personality and asked her to handle our finances as I could not. My wife, our families and friends were well aware that I have always been a nurturing and loving father who has enjoyed a hands-on role in raising our children. By 2007 our marriage became untenable, my wife and I separated and she returned with our two daughters to Adelaide to be with her family. I put in for a compassionate posting to move to South Australia so as to be close to our children.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I sought medical help for insomnia and stress as this was affecting me in a way that I couldn't explain, but I know now that it was due to my own experiences of abuse. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

On the 25th August 2011 at our children's school, I informed my ex-wife that I had had repressed memories of clergy abuse and that the next few months were going to be a bit stressful for me and that I was trialling some anti-depressants. [REDACTED]

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REPORTING

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. At that point, something clicked in me and I lost motivation, I then self-referred to the military psychology services. At this same time I presented to the Navy base Medical Centre with a rash on my penis and anus. This was diagnosed as a stress rash (non STD) by a dermatologist. During psychological sessions the counsellor asked if I was abused as a child, to which I responded "I don't think so", which at the time was true because I had no memory of the abuse, however, I was aware that I had been drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes at the St James Church. Within a few weeks of that, my grandmother, who I was visiting on weekends whilst based in Melbourne, passed away and a relative offered me some marijuana. A few days later, I was randomly drug tested by the military and returned a positive sample, and consequently kicked out of the Navy two weeks before I was due to have an ankle reconstruction.

I was now unemployed, near broke, on one good leg relocating to South Australia where I had no family or friends other than 2 children under 6 years old, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I lived in caravan parks and hotels for 3 months before I could find a rental and apply for a birth certificate to be able to prove to Department of Veteran Affairs who I was so as to receive surgery and financial assistance. I was suffering and sought help from a psychologist [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. Around May last year, through this process I found that I started talking about my childhood and in particular Fr Ronald Pickering, which lead to thoughts and dreams about the abuse that I experienced as a boy. I then continued to receive support from my psychologist to work through my repressed memories of abuse. I also regularly informed Hayley Carlson, Senior Rehabilitation Consultant for Personnel Placement Consultancies, whom was provided by DVA for support.

About three or four months later I heard Independent Senator for South Australia Nick Xenophon name Catholic priests in parliament, and he named Fr Ronald Pickering. I emailed Nick Xenophon the next morning and he responded, advising that I should contact the Police and the Catholic Church to complain about my abuse [REDACTED] I later came to understand that my abuser, Fr Pickering, was never convicted of sex offences and was deceased.

COMPLAINTS TO POLICE AND THE CHURCH

I was interviewed by South Australia Police, but was told that they would not take a statement or pursue a prosecution because Fr Pickering was dead. I was concerned that police should have

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conducted an investigation into the church's cover-up of abuse by priests even though my abuser was dead. I was also disappointed to hear that they don't keep records of crimes committed because the offender is dead. If other abuse victims are complaining about a deceased offender, then there is no central database or record of this.

On 1st December 2011, I contacted Peter O'Callaghan QC in Melbourne, who is the Independent Commissioner appointed by the Archdiocese of Melbourne to enquire into and report upon allegations of sexual abuse by priests. I explained to him my situation and that I wished to make a complaint in regards to being a victim of sexual abuse by a Catholic Church priest. Mr O'Callaghan suggested that I contact Ms Sue Sharkey, who is the coordinator for Carelink and a psychologist (see Attachment J).

I was asked to attend an interview in Melbourne, but because I lived in South Australia I was invited to provide a written account of my concerns instead (see attachment K). I was then referred to Carelink (a Catholic organisation) for support, and contacted Susan Sharkey.

CONTACT WITH MS SUSAN SHARKEY

I contacted Carelink by phone, and was flown to Melbourne for an interview on 13th January 2012. I met with psychiatrist Sue Brann and Carelink coordinator Sue Sharkey at the psychiatrist's office. Ms Sharkey told me that she was a psychologist, then I asked both the Ms Brann and Ms Sharkey at the outset if they were Catholic because I was concerned that they might not be unbiased. Ms Brann advised that she was not Catholic, but Ms Sharkey confirmed that she was Catholic and offered to leave the discussion. I agreed to Ms Sharkey staying to take notes. I was comfortable in the fact that I believed that the practitioner compiling the report, Ms Brann, was not biased by religious beliefs and that Susan Sharkey, the individual whose apparent sole duty was to approve the medical bills, should be aware of what she is going to be approving funds for. [REDACTED]

I agreed to the interview being taped and there were also notes taken throughout the discussion. The interview was largely managed by Ms Brann, but Ms Sharkey also asked questions about my abuse. Ms Sharkey also sought my opinion of the Catholic Church. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

When asked how my abuse had affected my spirituality, I explained that I lacked trust in the motives of authority figures and from a young age was forced to become a free thinker. I told them that I believed in God but refused to have any religious affiliation. I had been obsessed with thoughts on the subject of "religion and science" throughout my life but up until the last 18 months had always wondered why, as I was neither religious nor an academic.

I then explained that over the last 15 years "things" were making much sense to me and I had come up with a very simple but amazing "answer" based on our Universal Model of Three Dimensional Space/Time, however, till present I had lacked the ability to put this to paper. I told them that this "answer" not only described Einstein's "connections of profound generalities" but also the Hypostasis of the Holy Trinity, Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem, Field Theory and many other of the mysteries/conundrums within the sciences, philosophy and spirituality. I expressed to them that I was happy to give a 10 minute verbal presentation on this simple "answer" to whoever wished to be privy.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

During this interview I supplied my full maths/physics background documentation as well as my military psychological evaluation which states that I'm "a very clever man with a high level intelligence and a passion for Mathematics, Philosophy and Spirituality". No one asked for my 10 minute verbal presentation.

I am not suffering any delusions of grandeur or "Messiah Complex" as I see this "answer" as a common sense that has been described since any form of recorded history.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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After my final meeting with Ms Sharkey on the 22nd February 2012, I did an internet search and found a website for other victims of church sexual abuse. It had come to my attention that Ms Susan Sharkey was a former nun. I felt that Ms Sharkey should have disclosed this during our first meeting

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

RECEIPT OF COMPENSATION

On 19th April 2012, I received correspondence from Peter O'Callaghan QC [REDACTED] stating that he is satisfied that I am in fact a victim of sexual assault by Fr Ronald Pickering and that he had advised the Compensation Panel of his findings, and that the Panel would receive reports from Carelink and Ms Brann. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Due to my current situation, suffering financial hardship and needing legal support to fight for my children in the Family Court, I approached Peter O'Callaghan and asked for an advance of \$15,000. This was difficult to do, but I had no other choice given that I may lose my children in court. I signed an acknowledgement dated 6th August 2012, which states that I "hereby agree and acknowledge that in respect of \$15,000 to be advanced to me by Carelink in respect of my legal expenses that such sum shall be repaid by me from compensation monies awarded to me by the Compensation Panel..." (see Attachment P). To date I still haven't signed the release form offered to me in the past.

PRESENT

I have since stopped seeing the psychologist, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I was concerned that he was being pressured and influenced by Carelink since they started paying for my therapy sessions. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I did commence seeing another counsellor but I had to stop recently because I could no longer afford it.

I have recently been knocked back for jobs as my military qualifications are not valid in society. I am currently unemployed and have been so for 24 months due to my surgeries as well as having difficulty being organised, I struggle to finish things, and I have difficulty completing any sort of paperwork (I have received professional help in compiling this Parliamentary submission) and I struggle with the day to day mundane tasks. I am suffering with severe insomnia, dermatitis and stress. All symptoms which I believe are directly linked to the abuse I suffered. I am currently going through a Family Court for access to my children and my health is deteriorating as a result of the stress.

I am currently on Veterans Affairs payments, but that is going to cease shortly. I am left to deal with the trauma as a result of the abuse that I experienced, and to date no justice has been served for me as a victim of abuse at the hands of Fr Pickering. He was a known paedophile/rapist, but there were never any consequences for his criminal acts prior to his death. The Victorian Police have recently admitted that they should have spent more effort in pursuing him in England once he fled Australia. I have not received an apology from the Catholic Church and not received genuine support since disclosing this abuse. And finally, I have been utterly dissatisfied with the process in which the Catholic Church has dealt with my complaint.

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I take this opportunity to thank you for receiving this submission and hope that my experience helps to ensure that perpetrators of abuse and those that harbour these deviate criminals are brought to justice and that such atrocities like this are handled appropriately in the future.

OTHER ADDITIONAL KEY DOCUMENTS

- Downloaded internet document from Brokens Rites Australia – ‘Public inquiry needed: How the Melbourne archdiocese covered up for Father Pickering allowing him to escape’ (see **Attachment B**). This document contains Matthew’s story told by his mother (see highlighted) and mentions a third person who attempted suicide, which is me.
- Crimen Sollicitationis. How the Vatican instructed Catholic bishops around the world to cover up cases of sexual abuse or risk being thrown out of the Church (see **Attachment Q**).