

Witness Name: Robert Montagu

Statement No: 1

Exhibits:

Dated:

THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Witness Statement of Robert Montagu

I, Robert Montagu, will say as follows:-

1. I began working for an audiovisual company after leaving college and then became an importer of pottery, ceramics, kitchenware and giftware from Italy and other countries, a business which became a market leader in its field. I sold that business in 1995 and became a business consultant for a while, then retrained as a family therapist. I worked for NHS child and adolescent mental health services from 2004 to 2007 and then went into private practice in Dorset. In 2005 I started the Dorset Child and Family Counselling Trust which went on to become the Family Counselling Trust, operating across Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire and Hampshire.
2. My parents were separated when I was five and so when I visited my father's house during holiday times (probably in total for four weeks a year), my mother was not present and the children tended to look after themselves. I fell into the habit (I assume I was asked) of going to his bedroom for story-reading from 7.30 to 8.30 each morning I was there. No one knew of the habit except for the housekeeper who would bring tea and fresh orange juice for both of us at 8.00. This continued from age six to eleven when the abuse was discovered.
3. The sexual element began with stroking and kissing the body all over and sucking the penis, from some time between six and seven and onwards. At age nine this developed into my father using his erect penis to rub in between the cheeks of my bottom, achieving orgasm but always with the insertion of a handkerchief between his skin and mine. At age 11.2 there was one occasion of full penetration and ejaculation; after that the practice reverted to buttock-rubbing until discovery.
4. The bed visiting always happened in my father's house in West Dorset, in one of two bedrooms that my father used. The one act of full penetration happened at his house at [DPA]t, London SW1 on the evening before a trip to Switzerland.
5. The abuse led me to believe that I was standing in for my mother. My father often referred to missing her and compared me to her, even in bed. I also thought I should have been born a girl. I also thought I was serving as a prostitute for mercenary reasons such as presents and that filled me with self-depreciation. It later had the effect

of attracting me to boys at school from age eleven and twelve, which was an action I was determined to avoid and did.

6. However it led to years of struggle and self-dissatisfaction. I married early in order of normalize but the period of abuse is never far from my mind even now.
7. I was too ashamed to consider telling anyone until many years after, and would not have done so if it hadn't been for the discovery by a sister of myself and my father sharing a bath when I was eleven, as we always did. This led to immediate cross-examination by two sisters, followed by reports to my mother. I was interviewed in London by her and our family doctor on my return and I gave a full account of what had happened. However no action against my father was ever taken, nor any remedial action to help me, nor any avoidance of further unsupervised visits to my father following one summer's absence.
8. The most shocking element to me, apart from the abuse itself, was the failure of family action in defence of me. My father continued to pursue me after my return to his house later in the year (1961) and there was no attempt to ensure this did not occur.
9. I wrote my memoir, *A Humour of Love*, as I felt it was important, working as a family therapist and sometimes dealing with abusive matters concerning other children, to be open about my own history, though this never came into my own professional work. It is only by sharing such accounts that other victims can feel supported and learn conclusions that may be of some use to them. I decided to publish in 2014 and no sooner as by this time my father had been dead for nine years and my mother for seven. I didn't wish them to suffer from the effects of publication. It was also a window of opportunity before my grandchildren grew too old to avoid being caught up in any publicity.
10. As I mentioned in *A Humour of Love* I became vaguely aware at twelve of other boys going to his bedroom in the morning, though I had no way of knowing how far the relationship went. As I matured, I occasionally spoke to other men about this subject though not often and obtained further information then. The main research was done in the years before publication when I spoke to a number of men affected, with forty years spread of age. I know myself of ten victims but I would be surprised if the actual total was not nearer twenty.
11. I became aware of other victims by speaking to one person who would inform me of another that he knew of and if I knew that person, I would then contact them directly. Occasionally I would guess at a victim and then confirm details in conversation. Following my book's publication, one or two further people made contact with me to confirm themselves as victims.
12. There was not one person who wished to make any declaration to those in authority and they were usually anxious to break off discussion of the subject as soon as possible.

13. I was not aware of a police investigation into allegations made by one boy in 1972 until I read it in the newspapers. I was interested by my father's statement to the police to the effect that he was 'only romping'. How the world has changed since then, when such statements would lead (we hope) to certain prosecution.
14. The advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions was sought in the above-mentioned case and he decided that my father was a man of good character and standing and that a caution was sufficient. This should never have happened and is typical of the attitude taken at the time of leniency towards public men.
15. I have worked privately with families, couples and individuals since 2004 and there is no doubt that my personal experiences have helped my understanding of children's 'take' on the world presented to them. I always put the child's view foremost in discussions (in contrast to my own unconsulted childhood). I set up the Family Counselling Trust because it became obvious working in the NHS child and adolescent mental health service that services were over-stretched, waiting lists were one year old (then) and morale among professionals was sometimes overwhelmed. I decided to do what I could to shorten the gap where I was able and I am glad to say I have achieved that goal, with good results. Obviously the work I do is partly inspired by the total failure of mental health support in my own case and it is sad to see the NHS suffering increasingly from the same shortage of funding now, when we were the pride of the world in our CAMHS. It is vital to rebuild and extend the mental health provision for children to prevent early breakdown for abuse, parental separation and other reasons.
16. Such abuse of power is still a risk today, though lessened by changing attitudes. In my view mandatory disclosure should certainly apply in schools and other institutions, but more than that, I would follow Australia's lead in certain states to implement domestic mandatory disclosure. Marital law should not allow a wife to avoid the disclosure of an abusive husband (such as happened in my case). Severe penalties should be introduced for such cover-ups, with the allowance of certain extenuating circumstances.
17. My father was probably aware of others in the Westminster circuit who shared his own interests and activities, though I doubt whether there was collusive action. Certainly he used his introduction at Westminster School to attend services and I know of at least one boy that he befriended at that time. It would be interesting to hear if there are further stories that suggest any connivance of staff in such encounters.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed: **DPA**

Dated: 12/11/18