

**RESTRICTED**

Statement of: GEE, PETER ANTHONY

Form MG11(T)

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**WITNESS STATEMENT**

Criminal Procedure Rules, r27.2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s.9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5b

Statement of: GEE, PETER ANTHONY

Age if under 18: Over 18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18')

Occupation: HEAD TEACHER - RETIRED

This statement (consisting of 4 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature: PETER GEE

Date: 17/08/2017

Tick if witness evidence is visually recorded  (*supply witness details on rear*)

My given name was Peter GEE; my ecclesiastical name was Father Anthony. Having used the name Anthony for most of my life, I still use it now. I joined the Benedictine Order in 1953 at the age of 18. I joined at Ealing Abbey. I studied in Rome and at Oxford University and returned to the Abbey in 1965 when I began teaching at St Benedict's. I taught modern languages and religious studies. In 1975 I was made Head of the Middle School, this consisted of the 11 to 13 year old boys. In 1977 I was made Headmaster of the whole school. In 1985 I resigned as Headmaster. This was in part because I had a number of disagreements with Laurence SOPER in his role as Bursar. He and the Abbot, Francis ROSSITER, would make financial decisions without consulting me and I felt that a lay Headmaster would have found it easier to deal with them. In 1985 I left the school and ministered to the parish. I remained at the Abbey until 1990 at which point I left the priesthood. For a while I taught in other schools and then began work as a proof reader and translator for a law firm.

I don't remember Laurence SOPER joining the monastery; I think he joined in the early 1960s whilst I was at Oxford. Whilst I was Head of the Middle School, Laurence SOPER did some teaching in the Upper School. When I became Headmaster Laurence SOPER became Head of the Middle School. As Head of the Middle School he tried to run things himself and preferred me to keep out of it. I think that SOPER liked the idea of being 'an important person'. Whilst SOPER and I got on, I always found him very cool and distant.

Signature: Peter GEE  
2018

Signature witnessed by: BOB MODDREL

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When I became Headmaster it was the norm to administer corporal punishment as it had been when I had been a student at St Benedict's. I did not approve of corporal punishment and I informed the staff that it was to be discontinued. Several of the staff expressed concern that if we stopped immediately there would be a breakdown in discipline, so it was agreed that we would phase it out over 2 years, using it less and less. I don't remember SOPER expressing an opinion. At this time a member of staff, I don't remember who, approached me and stated that SOPER had resumed the 'old tradition of 'PD'' or Pants Down. This was apparently having the boys pull down their pants to be beaten on their bare behinds. This apparently had been the policy of the monks at Downside to ensure boys hadn't put a book down their trousers. I had never heard of this and it had certainly not happened to me when I was a schoolboy. I spoke to SOPER and told him that he must stop doing this, he agreed to do so. I also reminded him that it was my policy to phase out beatings. He also agreed with this. I did not receive any further complaints.

At the time I think that I was rather naive and whilst I thought what SOPER was doing was very unpleasant and humiliating, it never occurred to me that it was sexual. In hindsight I now wonder.

I think that the first time I heard about the allegations about SOPER was when he disappeared from Rome. I think I heard about it from an old friend and then saw it in the media. The only time I can remember SOPER talking about someone being attractive was once when he said that a woman working in a library had been very attractive.

Further to the above, whilst I have heard that these were allegations, at no time have I heard any details as to the nature of those allegations.

Further to the above, I should add that SOPER was the only person I was aware of conducting 'PD' Pants Down, and the only person I spoke to.

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2018

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