

In September 1965 a man called [RO-D3] came for interview and was appointed child care officer. [RO-D3] went to living at Cambridge House Hostel temporarily until he found a permanent address.

Around the third week in October, [RO-D3] came to see me in my office. He said that a lad in the hostel [RO-A49] had told him at the dining room that he had come home the worse for wear from Manchester and because of this Cyril SMITH had taken him into a room, told him to take down his trousers and underpants and smacked him on the bottom with his hand. I can't remember if he had told him to bend over his knee or not. [RO-A49] didn't want to complain as he saw it as a punishment for what he had done.

[RO-A49] had told him other boys were also being punished like this but they didn't know what they had done to deserve the punishment.

When [RO-D3] told me this I didn't make any notes or tell anyone what had been said. This was because I didn't want anything getting back to Cyril SMITH. He knew everything that was going on, I also didn't want to jeopardise any enquiry.

At this time Cyril SMITH was Secretary to the Management Committee at Cambridge House. Cambridge House was a private and independent establishment and the Council had no input. Cyril was also a Councillor for Rochdale and served on several committees. He was a very powerful man. I told [RO-D3] I'd like to see [RO-A49] to confirm what he had told him. A few days later [RO-D3] brought [RO-A49] down to see me. It was after work and I saw [RO-A49] by himself. [RO-A49] would have been about 15 years old at the time. [RO-A49] told me largely what [RO-D3] had told me that Cyril SMITH had beat him on his bottom for coming home the worse for wear. I think I asked him if it was over his clothing and he said NO.

He didn't seem very upset about it and didn't want to complain. When I look back now I wish I had asked him if Cyril had done anything else to him of a sexual nature. I regret not doing this.

I thanked [RO-A49] for coming to see me. I think I told [RO-D3] I'd have to think about what to do next. For the next couple of days I tried to think what was in the best interest of [RO-A49] and in the interest of the other boys.

I deliberated over the next few days. I didn't consult anyone else. I then decided to speak with the Chief Constable of Rochdale County Borough Police, Patrick ROSS. I knew Mr ROSS as we both attended the same church.

I made an appointment to see Patrick ROSS at his office at Rochdale Town Hall. I think it was the following week. I told him a boy who was in care had come to see me as a result of a staff member and it concerned the method of punishment Cyril had used for an alleged misdemeanour, and Cyril administering corporal punishment on his bare bottom, and it was not uncommon for this punishment to be used on other boys at Cambridge House. I told him the boy didn't want to complain. I told him I had no other information of a sexual nature.

Patrick ROSS listened, he did not write anything down. I was there about fifteen minutes. He said something like, I'LL LOOK INTO IT. When I left his office I was a little bit frightened that Cyril might find out.

A short time later I know it was a Sunday in November, possible 14<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> I was at home with my wife and our three children. It was about 2.00pm. There was a knock on the door, it was Cyril SMITH, he had never been to my house before. I invited him in and we went into the sitting room. Cyril was very disturbed and agitated his voice was breaking and rubbing his hands. He appeared very upset; I had never seen him like that.

Cyril said he was upset because there were accusations flying round town about his method of discipline at Cambridge House and that someone had even been to the police. He said there was no truth in the rumours and that he was telling me this because the Police might come and see me. I felt very uncomfortable, I was certain he knew something that brought him to my house. He was at my house a couple of hours going over the same things. As he got up to go he noticed some music on the piano. I asked what the music was, my wife said she had been practising the hymns for school assembly. He said words to the effect "YOU'LL BE WELL ADVISED TO SAY A PRAYER FOR ME".

About a week later I saw Patrick ROSS. We'd been to a chief officers meeting at the Town Hall which were held regularly on Thursday mornings. I followed him out on the steps of the Town Hall. I asked him if there were any developments on the matter we discussed. He said "IT'S BEEN DECIDED

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THERE'LL BE NO FURTHER ACTION TAKEN". It was a very brief meeting and he didn't elaborate.

I was unhappy with that decision, the boys who were in Rochdale's care who were placed at Cambridge House were removed shortly after I had to sign for their removal. I don't think I contacted any of the other authorities who had children at the home as I was concerned it would get back to Cyril. I did not speak to [REDACTED] about this. I think I was a bit relieved when Patrick ROSS told me as there would be no comeback on me. Cambridge House closed in December that year.

I was appointed Director of Social Services 1<sup>st</sup> April 1971. I had very little contact with Cyril SMITH. I never had any further complaints about Cyril. With regards to Knowl View Residential School it came under the Education Department remit, so I had nothing to do with it. I was not made aware of any complaints from residents at Knowl View.

In the early 70's I had cause to dismiss [REDACTED]. A lady made a complaint that [REDACTED] had taken some photographs of her son in the bath. I have since found out that he went to prison for sexual offences against boys.

Over the past few months I have been spoken to by a number of people from the press and media, to solicitors acting on behalf of the Council and complainants.

I have been shown a statement typed dated 20<sup>th</sup> January 1970, exhibit LMP/1 which has my name on the statement. I have read the statement, I cannot remember giving the statement or signing it. I can say my address is wrong, my occupation is wrong. It is missing where I went to see the Chief Constable in his office. Also when it talks about [REDACTED]'s character I only met [REDACTED] once in my office so I didn't know anything about it. If I had seen and read the statement I would have challenged the mistakes before signing it.

This statement has been read to me by Annette HOLLIDAY and I agree with everything written and I do not wish to make any changes.

Signed: L PRICE

Signature Witnessed By:

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