

S1118

RESTRICTED

Statement of: GORHAM, TIMOTHY PHILIP

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: GORHAM, TIMOTHY PHILIP

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

This statement (consisting of 3 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: TIMOTHY GORHAM Date: 28/09/2017

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

I am a Benedictine Monk based at Ealing Abbey. My ecclesiastical name is Father Timothy, my given name is Timothy Philip GORHAM. I entered the Abbey in 1989 and in September 1992 I went to Rome for 3 years to study. I would have returned to the Abbey during the summer breaks. Between 1995 and 2003 I worked in the Junior School as Teaching Assistant and Chaplain. In 1995 to 1996 I would do one lesson a week in the Upper School. Once or twice a week I would have group discussions with the 'A' level students around ethical and other issues. In 2003 or 2004 I became the Safeguarding Officer for the Abbey, a role I still hold.

I have been asked about my thoughts and memories of Laurence SOPER. When I joined the Abbey, SOPER was the Prior and the Bursar, in 1991 he was elected Abbot. I always thought that he got worked up very easily, he was complex, he could be very nice, but then suddenly change, which could unnerve people.

I remember that shortly after he became Abbot he had arranged for a blessing by the Bishop. When the date was changed at short notice he had a breakdown and I think he ended up in hospital. I think this happened twice in his first year as Abbot.

SOPER would also work both at **DPA** Young Offenders Institute and at **DPA** School. He sometimes brought boys whom I assume to have come from, or been former inmates of, **DPA** to work

Signature: Timothy GORHAM 2018 Signature witnessed by: BOD MODDREL

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at the Abbey and sometimes they would stay overnight or longer. On one occasion one of the boys stole a money box from the church. All I really remember about the boy was I think that he was **DPA**. On at least one occasion, boys from **DPA** came here for a confirmation service.

When I had the discussions with the 'A' level students, some of the boys talked about Father David PEARCE, saying things like "Sit on my lap little boy" inferring that he was attracted to young boys, this was done in a jokey way and there were no allegations of crime, so I did not think I needed to speak to anyone about it. Anyway these things were already mentioned amongst the monks at the Abbey, I think everybody knew about it.

When SOPER was first elected Abbot (as a junior monk I was not present), PEARCE was spoken about as a possible Abbot, but I heard that one of the monks waved a piece of paper around and his name was dropped. The inference was that the piece of paper contained a complaint, or allegation. Later, I can't remember whether it was 1999 when SOPER was re-elected or 2000 when Abbot Martin was elected, PEARCE was again spoken about as a potential Abbot, but he asked to be withdrawn. I was present for this.

In 2000 SOPER suddenly resigned as Abbot. Every Ash Wednesday the Abbot gives a speech (known as a "spiritual conference") to the community (the monks at the Abbey). On this Ash Wednesday, SOPER gave what amounted to a resignation speech. He said something about being disappointed that he had only been re-elected by a small margin. Within a day or two he had left the Abbey. It is common for an Abbot to leave the Abbey for about a year when he leaves his post. I believe he then became a Chaplain at the Army Recruitment Centre in Bassingbourn in Cambridgeshire. At some point he reappeared at the Abbey for a short time. I believe he had a **DPA** problem, he had a **DPA**. Sometime later he went to Sant Anselmo in Rome to take up a role there.

The first time I was aware of any allegations against any staff members was a year or two after Father Martin was elected. He told me not to allow PEARCE to take confession at the school. The first time I was aware of allegations against SOPER was in October 2001 when a claim was filed in the High Court against Laurence SOPER and the Church relating to sexual abuse. I produce the documents I have in relation to that case as TPG/1.

Signature: Timothy GORHAM
2018

Signature witnessed by: BOD MODDREL

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