

Summary of Report into Operation Ornament, by Detective Superintendent Jon Savell, Head of Public Protection Surrey Police, published 11th January 2013

Note: This is a 44 page report much of which considers whether appropriate police and criminal justice procedures were followed. Readers interested in the detail of these considerations are encouraged to refer to the original report. The review of Crown Prosecution Service decision-making in relation to Operation Ornament can be found in the Levitt report also published on January 11th 2013. The Levitt report is summarised in a separate accompanying article. In this article added commentary is in italics.

The report completed by DS Savell was commissioned on 6th November 2012 by Surrey police to examine and comment on Operation Ornament. This was the investigation launched on 13th May 2007 into allegations of sexual abuse committed by Jimmy Savile on teenage girls in the late 1970s. It concluded on 30th October 2009 with no further action.

This summary of the Savell report mainly focuses on the chronology of Operation Ornament and on details of Savile's responses during the process of investigation

Chronology of Operation Ornament

On 13th May 2007 Surrey Public Protection Investigation Unit was contacted by an ex-resident of Duncroft School, Staines following her report to Dorset Police that she was witness to Jimmy Savile indecently assaulting a fellow resident in the late 1970s.

Duncroft was a residential school run by children's charity Barnardo's for 'maladjusted girls' aged 14 – 19 years. Girls were usually around 15-16 years old when they were admitted and the average length of stay was 15-18 months.

Through liaison with Barnardo's and other enquiries a total of twenty-three girls were identified who might have been victims or witnesses to the activity of Savile during his visits to Duncroft. Twenty-one of these women were contacted by letter in May, June and July 2008 which resulted in fourteen being spoken to by police.

The result of these enquiries was an account obtained from one ex- resident that she had witnessed Savile, whilst in the TV room, put another girl's hand on his groin area and rub it over his trousers. When spoken to, the alleged victim's account was very similar to that of the informant "with some understandable finer detail discrepancies" in particular about the fact that there had been a blanket over her lap at the time the assault happened (Para. 3.9). However, she did not wish to make a statement or support any prosecution.

One had no evidence to give of abuse of herself but did provide details of a close relation, who was alleged to have been assaulted by Savile whilst she was performing a concert as part of a choir at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. The former member of the girls' choir subsequently met with officers and provided a written statement but concluded that by confirming that she wanted no police or court action. Her account was that after performing at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, just before boarding the coach, Savile asked her for a good-bye kiss. She approached him expecting a usual 'peck on the cheek' but instead Savile kissed her on the lips and placed his tongue in her mouth.

Another former resident said that Savile would visit Duncroft and ask the girls to comb his hair and massage his neck and that on one occasion he asked her to perform oral sex on him, which she refused to do. This woman would have been 16 and 17 years old when at Duncroft. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) advised that the only relevant criminal offence that may have been committed was under S.1 Indecency with Children Act 1960, which would only be applicable if committed against a child under the age of 14.

Ten other former residents were contacted but no further allegations were made. In summary, therefore, no evidence was available which would enable the police to proceed with a criminal prosecution and in consultation with the CPS it was concluded that "... there was no case to proceed as the incidents were relatively minor and they were so long ago there would be grounds for an abuse of process argument." The conclusion was there would not be any prosecution and that Savile 'be advised'.

The CPS process was reviewed, on the instructions of the Director of Public Prosecutions, in the January 2013 Levitt report, which is summarised separately in this series.

Savile's Response

Our perception of Savile's behaviour now is considerably different to that at the time of these investigations. In trying to understand how so many alleged offences could have been committed over such a long period (cf. Giving Victims a Voice, 2013). Savile's response to the police in the case of Operation Ornament may give some indication about his response to allegations more generally.

On 2nd June 2009 a recorded delivery letter was sent to Savile's home address requesting he make contact with Surrey police. Savile 'phoned the following day, was advised of the nature of the allegation and an arrangement made that he would meet the relevant officer when Savile was next in the area, as he often visited Broadmoor.

On 8th June a police Inspector from West Yorkshire Police contacted Surrey police. He said that he was personally known to Savile, who had lost the contact details of the detective he was to meet and the Inspector passed on a telephone number for Surrey Police to contact Savile again. A further telephone conversation took place with Savile but by September 2009 he had

failed to provide any arrangements to meet. Consequently he was written to again and on 24th September 2009 telephone arrangements were made for an interview with Savile at Stoke Mandeville Hospital on 1st October 2009.

On 1st October 2009 Savile was interviewed on tape under caution at his private office at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. Present with him was a 'friend' who was a trustee of the Jimmy Savile Stoke Mandeville Charitable Trust. "It is not clear in what capacity this male was present as there is no indication that Savile required an appropriate adult and he was not acting as a legal representative." (Para. 3.21)

Savile denied all allegations during the 56 minute interview. He could not recall when he visited Duncroft other than that the first time was with Princess Alexandra for a garden party. Overall, at the invitation of the matron, he believed he visited a total of three or four times. He denied being alone with any of the girls or ever going upstairs into dormitories. He stated there were always lots of people about, maybe thirty or forty. He stated that he never brought gifts for the girls as that was against the rules and he never gave any of them a lift in his car.

He remembered a choir coming to Stoke Mandeville but denied being alone with any of the girls or any indecent assault. He said that there were always lots of people around.

He said that he believed these allegations were simply people trying to get money from him and were unfounded. He explained that he had contacts within the police at Leeds and whenever he received letters alleging that he had done something he gave them to his contacts who 'get rid' of them. (See summary of Levitt Report for more detail)

He concluded by explaining that he often got 'these types of letters' and his 'policy' was to get his lawyers to take these people to court and sue them. He said he had been successful on number of occasions and been awarded several hundred thousand pounds as a result.

Following this interview the Senior Crown Prosecutor advised, on 28th October 2009, that "...on applying the evidential test, in the absence of statements from victims there is clearly insufficient evidence to charge the suspect with any criminal offence". The investigation was concluded on 30th October 2009.

Other areas covered by the Savell report

The Savell report goes on to consider issues relating to: Decision making; Governance and oversight; CPS contact; Contact with other agencies and forces; National Guidance and policy; Press contact and coverage; Early reviews and findings and concludes with Areas of Learning. These are considered under the headings of:

- Length of time to conduct the investigation:
- No contact with staff at Duncroft:
- Absence of a victim-centred approach;
- Disclosure to other victims;
- Governance.

Whilst there are specific recommendations about lessons learned the overall tone of the report is positive about Surrey police action at the time. The tone of the Levitt Report is noticeably less positive.

However, this is inevitably a highly selective summary and interested readers are referred to the original document for the detail.

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