

SPEECH GIVEN BY DANIEL JANNER QC to members and Guest of the Society of Conservative Lawyers, Jubilee Room, 13th May 2019

Mr Janner opened his speech by reminding the audience that the story of his father's (Lord Janner) case and others, like Sir Edward Heath, Harvey Proctor, Paul Gambaccini and other prominent figures, must be told.

As Sir Richard Henriques wrote in his report on Operation Midland.

“prominent people...are more vulnerable to false complaints than others...They are vulnerable to compensation seekers, attention seekers, and those with mental health problems. The internet provides the information and detail to support a false allegation.

Entertainers are particularly vulnerable to false allegations meeting, as they do, literally thousands of attention seeking fans who provoke a degree of familiarity which may be exaggerated or misconstrued in their recollection many years later.

Deceased persons are particularly vulnerable as allegations cannot be answered.”

Mr Janner continued:

“So, I use my late father's case as one such example. It mirrors other cases. The most notable being Sir Edward Heath. In Sir Edward's case there was one central false accuser. That was followed by a highly publicised press conference in Salisbury. And along came 30 so called victims who made complaints. These included claims of satanic child abuse.

Although Sir Edward was dead, there followed a 2 year police investigation; after which, the Chief Constable of Wiltshire, Mike Veal claimed that he was: “120% convinced” that Edward Heath was a paedophile; and had he been alive would have been interviewed under caution.

No doubt, given the weight of numbers, and the CPS policy under Alison Saunders, he would have been charged. Since then, as you know, the allegations have unravelled.

They were a combination of fantasists and opportunists, and no one believes a word of it. In a strange quirk of fate Heath's parents were next door neighbours of my grandparents in Broadstairs. Had it been known the twitter conspiracy theorists would have had a field day.

My father's case followed the precise same pattern. One central complainant. A highly publicised search. 30 plus other so-called victims jumping on the bandwagon. Allegations of an establishment cover up. A man too ill to be interviewed; not dead yet; but brain dead.

And like Heath died an innocent man, never convicted of an offence.

My father was a successful barrister before he was elected as MP for Leicester West in 1970. He was happily married for over 40 years and had three children. He became an effective, high profile back bencher. He was also kind and generous, to young and old, male and female. He took the deprived under his wing.

This stemmed from his army days as a war crimes investigator. He worked in the kinderheim at the Bergan-Belsen concentration camp. His role was the rehabilitation and mentoring of gravely damaged child survivors of the holocaust. This experience haunted him for the rest of his life. It accounted for his attitude throughout his life to underprivileged children from broken homes. We met many such children over the years.

One such person who I will call Mike, as he retains the protection of anonymity. In 1975, Mike was then aged about 15. My sisters and I recall him. He was in care in Leicester. As a family all of us looked after him for a few months. But when he repeatedly stole from us, we had to say goodbye.

No more was thought about him for the next 16 years. Until 1991.

In 1991 a Leicester Care home manager called Frank Beck was charged with horrendous sexual offences. He was tried; convicted and received 3 life sentences. Beck's defence at trial was that he was not the abuser but Janner was. Beck relied on his star witness Mike.

But their lies were exposed in the prosecution's cross-examination. Mike and Beck were disbelieved by the jury. The jury were right because important things have since emerged about Mike.

Firstly, we now know that he himself was an abuser of children when in the care of Beck. So, Beck blackmailed him into giving evidence for him.

Secondly, Mike was not only dishonest, but in 2002 was himself convicted of abusing a boy and received 4 years sentence of imprisonment.

Thirdly, shortly after Beck's conviction, my father later received a letter from Beck's former cell mate. His name was Norman Newell. It is significant.

He wrote a statement to the police. He was on remand with Beck in prison. And I quote only part of it: "He told me he was going to drag all the top people in. I asked him what he meant, and he said he'd got one of the kids to say that Greville Janner had taken him to Scotland and bugged him. I told him that it was dangerous bringing politics into it and asked if it was true. He said no, but it would throw the light off him."

After the Beck trial, my father made a statement in the House of Commons during which he said: "I have been able to ride out the agony on this ordeal in good heart.

But it has not been easy. As a Member of Parliament, I am now well placed to fight back. That would not have applied to any of our constituents or to any other citizens placed by law in this impossible and unjust situation.”

As far as we were concerned that was that. The end of an ugly chapter.

In 1997, my father was made a Peer. Then fast forward to 2013.

On 20th December 2013 his London flat was searched by 18 Leicester police officers who turned up without any warning at 7.00am. He was 85 years old suffering from very serious dementia. He was near to death. My mother had died 10 years previously and he was living alone with a full-time carer. He was very frightened.

He was obviously far too ill to be interviewed – so unable to refute Mike’s allegations and fresh allegations by his fellow collaborators and erstwhile care home friends. That didn’t put the police off; any more than in the Heath case. On the contrary, following the very same pattern in the Sir Cliff Richard and Heath cases, the police advertised the search, trawling for others to come forward. To provide corroboration to the unsustainable without weight of numbers. The accused becoming in Sir Cliff’s graphic words: “live bait.” And the allegations came thick and fast. There was no assessment of the claims or sifting.

They included the following: Rape at the Carlton club. Yes, the Carlton club. He was a Labour MP. An allegation of rape by a woman who later issued proceedings for damages from the security of Newark Mental Institution. A locked facility. An allegation of rape and torture over an entire weekend in a London hotel. The police failed to ask us for his passport. Had they done so, they would have seen that he was in Australia that weekend.

An allegation by a man who claimed my father always abused him in the presence of another politician. That politician is still alive and is a former cabinet minister. I will not name him.

These allegations of rape and torture were of course wholly out of character. A man of exemplary impeccable character of the highest repute. And very high profile, very much in the public eye, in Leicester where all the allegations stem from.

To show how insane the investigation had become, in June 2014 the Leicester police telephoned me to ask if I had been sexually abused by my father. I told them I had not and they could save themselves the train fare. Yet they insisted on sending down a specialist team to ask the same question.

Finally, in 2015 the then DPP Alison Saunders announced that he was too ill to be tried. That was no surprise. What was a surprise was her mishandling of the statement she then put out. Essentially, she claimed the evidence was strong against him. Yet she plainly had failed to examine critical exculpatory material, which ultimately led to the collapse of all the civil claims.

The press then had a field day claiming the rape of justice, fuelled by the civil solicitors. In flooded the civil letters before action. The solicitors needed the DPP's decision to be overturned.

They wanted facts to be found by a jury– the procedure following a finding of incapacity. Findings of fact although not amounting to a conviction, persuasive before a judge in a subsequent civil trial. So, the solicitors put in an application for a victim's review of the decision. And with the weight of the press behind them, the decision was overturned. This led the sad spectacle in August 2015 of my father being dragged to Westminster Magistrates court, double incontinent, weeks from death. The request for a video link to his home was turned down. No doubt to the extreme annoyance of the civil solicitors, and the false accusers, my father inconveniently died on 19th December 2015.

That was a few weeks before the fact-finding exercise in the Crown Court was to have taken place. That did not end the civil claims. Those continued against the Estate. 9 issued High Court Claims. 33 letters before action.

All banking on a settlement; confident that the limitation period would be a hurdle which could be overcome. By now we had that clear exculpatory evidence:

1. None complained against my father when in care, although they complained against others.
2. Not a single word against my father in any social service file of any claimant.
3. Clear evidence of collusion and manufacturing of false claims.
4. Some plainly pure fantasy.
5. None, other than Mike, came forward in 1991 during the Beck trial to claim abuse by my father but waited until the prospect of easy civil pickings came along decades later.
6. All had a track record of convictions for serious dishonesty; and in many cases drugs and violence.

All the issued claims issued were dropped and the remaining claims fell like dominos. For my family there was at last some justice.

However, we still had IICSA – the beleaguered Inquiry into Child sex abuse, previously known as the Goddard inquiry.

The inquiry was set up in the wake of the hysteria whipped up by Tom Watson and others. It centred on the lurid allegations of Nick and concentrated on Leon Brittan. Goddard was a New Zealand judge and the Inquiry's third chairman. She had decided in 2015 that my father's case merited a whole strand. The only individual with a strand to himself. The others being institutions like the Roman Catholic Church and Westminster.

He was not an institution. The inquiry was set up by Parliament to deal with institutional failings.

He could not answer back from the grave, allegations being made in public without the benefit of cross-examination. But Goddard's successor, Jay still refused drop the Strand – despite the civil proceedings collapsing. And we now face a three week Kafkaesque hearing starting on 3rd February next year.

It will be a macabre show trial based on an assumption of guilt. Overturning the presumption of innocence. Inevitable character assassination which discredits the work of the inquiry and genuine allegations and victims. Lord Campbell-Savours, no personal friend of my father, has repeatedly described the strand in the Lords, as an affront to justice which hints of anti-Semitism.

Finally, what wider implications does my father's and other such cases have?

1. There is now a wider recognition that fraudulent civil claims are being made riding on the back of the post Saville frenzy. That opportunist fantasists do actually exist.
2. There must be change by the police and CPS that in terminology. Complainants only become victims following convictions.
3. There has to be an end to believing all complaints are true. As Sir Richard Henriques said in his report: "Requiring an investigator to believe a complaint which may or may not be true is a recipe for injustice." It is a policy which "perverts our system of justice."
4. We need a law to provide for anonymity for those accused of sexual offences until charge. That will put an end to the catastrophic consequences of early publication of a suspect's name. It will end highly publicised searches. It will protect the reputations of all innocent suspects from the stigma of a false sexual allegation. It will provide balance given the complainant's identity is protected.

That is what we are campaigning for in FAIR (Falsely Accused Individuals for Reform), with the help of Harvey Proctor, Paul Gambaccini, Sir Cliff Richard, Stephen Fry, academics and lawyers.

Sir Cliff is launching a parliamentary petition on 1st July. We need 100,000 signatures to secure a debate.

5. The governments recently published white paper hopefully will lead to controls on social media which are necessary to end the scourge of trolls and false accusers on line.

Finally, these false claims can and must be fought in the name of justice and to preserve the good names of those falsely accused, dead or alive.