



Neutral Citation Number: [2015] EWFC 26 (Fam)

Case No: ZC14C00315

IN THE FAMILY COURT
Sitting at the Royal Courts of Justice

Royal Courts of Justice
Strand, London, WC2A 2LL

Date: 19/03/2015

Before :

MRS JUSTICE PAUFFLEY

Re P and Q (Children: Care Proceedings: Fact Finding)

Hannah Markham for the London Borough of Barnet
Ella Draper, the mother, did not appear and was not represented
June Venters QC for the father, Ricky Dearman
Justin Ageros for the children by their guardian

Hearing dates: 17 – 20 February, 3 – 6 and 10 – 12 March 2015

Approved Judgment

I direct that pursuant to CPR PD 39A para 6.1 no official shorthand note shall be taken of this Judgment and that copies of this version as handed down may be treated as authentic.

.....
MRS JUSTICE PAUFFLEY

This judgment was delivered in public. The judge has given leave for this version of the judgment to be published on condition that (irrespective of what is contained in the judgment) in any published version of the judgment the anonymity of the children is preserved. All persons, including representatives of the media, must ensure that this condition is strictly complied with. Failure to do so will be a contempt of court.

Mrs Justice Pauffley:

Introduction and executive summary

1. This judgment is being given in public and without anonymisation save as to the children's names.
2. The subject children have been named repeatedly on the internet. Their photographs and film clips in which they feature have been published and re-published widely. Filmed police interviews of the children have been uploaded on to publicly accessible websites; so, too, intensely personal information relating to both children. As at 10 March 2015, more than 4 million people worldwide had viewed online material relating to this case.
3. It is inevitable that a large proportion of those have a sexual interest in children. Any rational adult who uploads film clips to Youtube featuring children speaking about sexual activity must be assumed to realise that fact.
4. I considered but ultimately rejected the suggestion that the children's names should appear within the judgment. My priority is to protect them from further harm of whatever kind. Those who have posted material identifying the children have done so with flagrant disregard for their welfare interests. I see no good reason for adding to the damage already done. Only those with prurient or unhealthy curiosity will take steps to identify the children. My faith in humanity indicates that the overwhelming majority of individuals will do nothing because they, like me, have no interest in inflicting further harm.
5. In the period before 13 January 2015, there had been some relatively limited online publication of court and other relevant material. It had been my hope that after discussion with the mother and her McKenzie Friend on 13 January, there would have been withdrawal of material from the internet. Since about 26 January the volume posted in a variety of formats on different sites has increased markedly; and the claims made against the father, the children's former head teacher, other teachers, professionals and a very large number of parents at the children's former school have proliferated.
6. Many of those individuals are now living in fear because they have been identified on the internet as abusers of children and their contact details including telephone numbers, home and email addresses have been published. Lives have been disrupted. Several of those implicated have received malicious, intimidating 'phone calls and emails at all hours of the day and night from all over the world. For example, "*Hey cock. We're coming for you. You scum paedo.*"
7. It has been necessary for the police to protect worried parents and children at the gates of the school in Hampstead at the centre of the allegations. Prospective parents have wondered whether to withdraw their children from allocated places. Existing parents have been uniformly supportive of the school and every member of the teaching staff.
8. All the signs are that those responsible for posting material derive a great deal of personal satisfaction from attracting interest to their spiteful work from many

thousands of people. It's akin to the sensation, I imagine, of a Facebook user receiving an indication that some posting or other has been "liked."

9. This necessarily lengthy judgment has one essential purpose. It is to provide definitive conclusions upon a quantity of evidence at the end of a thorough-going hearing. I have surveyed the relevant history as well as all of the significant developments in a wide-ranging police and social services investigation. Everything of importance on all sides of the dispute has been considered so as to enable me to arrive at authoritative findings.
10. These are care proceedings brought by the London Borough of Barnet relating to two children, P and Q who are 9 and 8 years old respectively. Their parents are Ella Draper and Ricky Dearman.
11. In September 2014, lurid allegations of the most serious kind were drawn to the attention of the Metropolitan Police. In a variety of ways, it was suggested that P and Q were part of a large group of children from north London who had been sexually abused, made to abuse one another and that they had belonged to a satanic cult in which there was significant paedophile activity.
12. Specifically, it was said that babies were supplied from all over the world. They were bought, injected with drugs and then sent by TNT or DHL to London. The assertions were that babies had been abused, tortured and then sacrificed. Their throats were slit, blood was drunk and cult members would then dance wearing babies' skulls (sometimes with blood and hair still attached) on their bodies. All the cult members wore shoes made of baby skin produced by the owner of a specified shoe repair shop.
13. Children, it was alleged, would be anally abused by adult members of the cult using plastic penises or "willies."
14. Christchurch Primary School in Hampstead was said to be where the "main action" occurred but at least seven other local schools were named. East Finchley swimming pool was identified as one of the other meeting venues for the paedophile ring. Rituals were performed, so it was claimed, in an upstairs room at the McDonald's restaurant where the "boss" allowed child sacrifice because he was a member of the cult. Human babies were prepared, cooked in the ovens within a secret kitchen and then eaten by cult members.
15. It was alleged that the children's father, Ricky Dearman, was the leader of the cult and that others included the children's headteacher, Ms Forsdyke, another teacher, Mr Hollings, the priest at the adjacent church, a large number of named parents of other children, social workers, CAFCASS officers and police officers. It was said that, in all, more than a hundred people were involved in 'doing sex' to the children.
16. I am able to state with complete conviction that none of the allegations are true. I am entirely certain that everything Ms Draper, her partner Abraham Christie and the children said about those matters was fabricated. The claims are baseless. Those who have sought to perpetuate them are evil and / or foolish.
17. All the indications are that over a period of some weeks last summer, P and Q were forced by Mr Christie and Ms Draper, working in partnership, to provide concocted

accounts of horrific events. The stories came about as the result of relentless emotional and psychological pressure as well as significant physical abuse. Torture is a strong word but it is the most accurate way to describe what was done to the children by Mr Christie in collaboration with Ms Draper.

18. The children were made to take part in filmed mobile 'phone recordings in which they relayed a series of fabricated satanic practices. Subsequently, at the instigation of Abraham Christie and Ella Draper, the children repeated their false stories to Jean-Clement Yaohirou, Mr Christie's brother in law, in a late night discussion. It lasted for about three hours; Mr Christie and Ms Draper did most of the talking.
19. P and Q were ABE (Achieving Best Evidence) interviewed on 5, 11 and 17 September 2014. On the first two occasions, they supplied information about events they claimed had occurred, similar in their overall content to the mobile 'phone video clips and audio recording. On 17 September, in ABE interview, both children withdrew their allegations. Each stated they had been made to say things by Abraham Christie, the mother's partner, which were not true; and they gave very full details of the way in which he had secured their compliance.
20. Ms Draper and Mr Christie have not participated by being present in court. I am as sure as I can be that their absence has been deliberate. They have chosen to remain away; but the internet campaign has continued. Countless online articles have been posted in which the truth of the satanic abuse claims is asserted repeatedly. Notwithstanding injunctions restraining Ms Draper and Sabine McNeill, one of her supporters, from publishing information from the proceedings on the internet or elsewhere, such material continues to be uploaded. Efforts to persuade internet servers to remove material have been of only limited value. As soon as information is removed by one provider, it emerges elsewhere.
21. The hearing has been lengthy. I listened to evidence from 16 witnesses. I read thousands of pages of written material and watched six ABE interviews. I viewed a dozen or so short film clips of the children being questioned by Ms Draper and Mr Christie and listened to the very lengthy audio recording.
22. The forensic inquiry has been full and thorough. It has made little difference that Ms Draper has been absent. I have been actively assisted in my investigative role by Ms Markham, Counsel for the local authority, and Mr Ageros who represents the guardian. Each has asked questions designed to explore those matters which, in all probability, the mother would have raised. Close attention has been given to the claims she'd made in her written material so as to ensure her case was put to all relevant witnesses.

Essential background

23. Ms Draper has an older child, R, now almost an adult, who is not related to Mr Dearman. His father is Will Draper. R has lived with his father full time since the summer of 2010.
24. The parents of P and Q met in 2003. Their relationship had disintegrated by 2006 when the father went to live in an adjacent street. There were occasional referrals to

the police when domestic violence was alleged. Ms Draper initiated private law proceedings in 2008.

25. Over the course of the next six years, there was never a time when the children's contact with their father proceeded smoothly. Countless returns to court achieved very little. If there was an attempt to achieve judicial continuity it failed miserably. Between November 2010 and August 2014 when the case was pending at First Avenue House, High Holborn it drifted between no fewer than seven different judges. None of the nine hearings resulted in a considered judgment on the basis of oral evidence. The essential cause of the problems was never the subject of judicial determination.
26. A non molestation injunction order was made against the father in 2010. There was some involvement on the part of the London Borough of Camden; in December 2008 a core assessment was prepared. Between May 2010 and October 2013, therapeutic sessions occurred intermittently at the Tavistock Clinic. There was a period, notably between November 2011 and November 2012, when the children did not have contact with their father.
27. There was intermittent concern about P's relationship with her mother and also that both children were presenting as and complaining of being hungry at school.
28. In May 2014, after a period of renewed involvement by the London Borough of Camden, Mr Dearman had contact with the children for the first time since October 2013. In that same month, the mother met Abraham Christie.
29. On 4 June 2014, there was a scene in the playground at Christchurch School when Mr Christie was collecting P and Q at the end of the school day. He was loud and aggressive, accusing the teachers of poisoning the children by giving them the food supplied at the school. By the middle of June, according to Ms Draper, Mr Christie was staying over at her home on two or three nights each week.

Evolution of the allegations

30. In August 2014, at a time when he was holiday in France, Jean-Clement Yaohirou received 'phone calls and messages from Mr Christie in which he said he had information regarding the abuse of children. In evidence, Mr Yaohirou said that Abraham "*had not been coming forward with specific information*" but was "*trying to give (him) justification.*" Abraham Christie had said that a church, a school in Hampstead and a police station in Haringey were involved. Mr Yaohirou had asked whether Mr Christie "*had evidence*". He said, "*Yes;*" and "*that was it for July.*"
31. In early August, the mother, Mr Christie and the children went abroad. They travelled to Gibraltar and then Morocco. They returned on 4 September.
32. It seems entirely probable that the majority of the short film clips of the children 'speaking to camera' were made at the airport whilst awaiting their flight back to England. There are others which appear to have been made whilst Q was either getting ready for bed or had awoken from sleep.

33. When Mr Yaohirou came back to England on 3 September, he had told Mr Christie over the 'phone that "*anyone can make an allegation*" but he would need "*sufficient evidence for the police to take the case forward.*" Mr Christie had replied, "*I will bring you evidence.*"
34. On 4 September 2014 in the late evening, Mr Yaohirou returned to his home after work to find Mr Christie, P and Q present. They were subsequently joined by Ms Draper.
35. With great presence of mind, Mr Yaohirou recorded the conversations between himself, Mr Christie, the children and the mother on his mobile 'phone.
36. Because, according to Mr Christie, Haringey police officers were implicated, Mr Yaohirou decided to report the matter to Scotland Yard. Subsequently, he was in touch by email with Detective Inspector Cannon, the senior investigating officer with responsibility for overseeing the police inquiry. By then Mr Yaohirou was, as he said in evidence, "*greatly concerned for the children's welfare.*"
37. Mr Yaohirou described how he had suggested to DI Cannon that the children should be placed in a safe environment until the case had been sorted out. Mr Yaohirou said he had been unsettled by what he'd heard and believed the children needed some medical or psychological assistance.
38. On 5 September at about 15.00 Barnet Police began what DI Cannon described in evidence as a "*wide ranging investigation*" involving as it seemed "*threats to life.*" In all, six officers were deployed. That evening, DC Martin conducted ABE interviews with P and Q. Overnight, in response to the mother's perceived fear, a panic alarm was installed at the home. DI Cannon compiled his summary of events that evening and logged it onto the system at 00.44 on 6 September.
39. On Monday 8 September, the children were taken by the police on a drive around the area in an unsuccessful attempt to identify specific locations where abusive practices had occurred.
40. On 10 September, DS Fernandez and DC Martin visited and inspected the interior of the church adjacent to Christchurch School. No notice had been given of their intended arrival. They had a good look around the vestry, including within the drawers where the priest's vestments were stored, searching for material to assist in their inquiries. They found nothing of interest to the inquiry.
41. That same day, P and Q underwent further ABE interviews, led by DC Martin. DS Fernandez interviewed the mother. He described in evidence how Ms Draper had told him in great detail about abuse but there had been "*no tears at all.*" There was, he said, "*a distinct lack of emotion.*" It was "*just like she had learned this – it was quite strange.*"
42. On 11 September, P and Q were made the subjects of a Police Protection Order.
43. On 12 September, both children were examined by Dr Hodes, a consultant community paediatrician at both the Royal Free Hospital and University College London Hospital.

44. On 16 September, Dr Hodes performed a second examination of both children.
45. On 17 September, there were further ABE interviews.

The mother's and Mr Christie's participation

46. In the initial stages of the proceedings, Ms Draper had the advantage of representation by experienced Solicitors and Counsel. On 10 December 2014, at court, she dispensed with her legal team. My first involvement with the case was on 13 January 2015. Dates were secured for this hearing as follows: 17 – 20 February, 3 – 6 and 10 – 12 March. On 13 January, the indications from Ms Draper were that once again she would avail herself of legal representation.
47. Until 26 January 2015, the mother appeared as a litigant in person assisted by McKenzie friends. On 9 February my clerk notified the parties, by email, that there would be a hearing the following day. Ms Draper failed to attend court on 10 February when mandatory and prohibitory injunctions were made against her. Ms Draper has not filed further evidence nor any schedule of the detailed findings sought as directed by my order of 20 January. Arrangements had been made for her to attend at the offices of the local authority to collect the final bundle and Practice Direction documents. Ms Draper did not attend although her email communication had suggested she would.
48. The oral evidence began on 17 February. At 08.51 that day, my clerk received an email from Ms Draper in which she asked permission for her McKenzie friend, Belinda McKenzie to represent her and her parents' interests in court. Ms Draper stated that she had been "*prevented from being present in the court*" and that Ms McKenzie had her "*formal instruction to convey (her) position.*" Ms McKenzie reiterated that request at the beginning of the hearing. But, as I explained to Ms McKenzie, in circumstances where the mother herself was absent, the Practice Guidance relating to McKenzie Friends expressly prohibits such an individual from acting as the litigant's agent or from conducting the litigation on her behalf. In Ms Draper's absence, it seemed to me that there was no proper role for Ms McKenzie.
49. In response to my inquiry, it was established that Ms McKenzie remained in contact with Ms Draper. She assured me she would pass on a message urging the mother to participate by coming to court and informing her that the hearing would continue in her absence. Outside court on 17 February, Ms McKenzie apparently indicated to the local authority's legal team that Ms Draper was in the process of instructing a lawyer. However, at no stage, has there been any contact with anyone purporting to act on behalf of Ms Draper.
50. The mother has remained absent from the court. Her partner, Abraham Christie was outside the front entrance of the building on 17 February as part of the group campaigning for the "return of the 'Whistleblower Kids' to their Russian family." A witness summons was issued requiring his attendance to answer questions on Friday 20 February. Attempts to serve that summons were unsuccessful.
51. Earlier attempts at securing Mr Christie's participation in the proceedings because of the likelihood that the local authority would seek findings against him were wholly

unsuccessful. A series of communications from the local authority's Solicitor went unanswered.

52. It may be the mother would contend that she has been prevented from attending this hearing as the result of police action on the evening of 12 February. DS Paul Speer from Colindale police station described in evidence what happened firstly on the morning of 10 February when he spoke with Ms Draper over the telephone to discuss the material on the internet. Ms Draper told DS Speer that "*it was nothing to do with (her).*" She did not wish to speak to him and did not trust the police.
53. On 12 February, police officers attended at Ms Draper's address. Her car was on the driveway. A gentleman spoke with the police through the letter box and indicated that he was the mother's lawyer. The police explained they were there to discuss possible offences committed under s.4 of the Harassment Act 1997. They were denied entry to the property. Whilst the police were waiting for the means to secure a forced entry, three people climbed out of a first floor window, ran along the roof line of three or four houses and climbed down onto some nearby garages where they disappeared from sight.
54. The mother has not been seen by anyone in authority since 12 February. There are rumours that she has fled abroad. Her mother, Mrs Gareeva, told me she had had several phone conversations with her daughter. The last occasion was the day before the grandparents came to give evidence on 4 March. Ms Draper had not said where she was and had not mentioned the court hearing. Mrs Gareeva said she had tried to persuade her daughter to come back. In response, Ms Draper had said she was afraid she would be arrested and would not be able to "*fight for the children.*" Mrs Gareeva also said that Mr Christie who they had seen as recently as 17 February had said that they, the grandparents "*should not know*" where their daughter was.
55. There is no substance in the assertion that the mother has been prevented from participating at this hearing. If she had been arrested on 12 February in connection with harassment allegations, the overwhelmingly likelihood is that she would have been released on bail enabling her to come to court on 17 February. If she had been remanded in custody, I would have been in contact with the police and prison authorities so as to make appropriate arrangements for Ms Draper's attendance at court.
56. As it is, Ms Draper has not communicated either with the local authority or with my clerk at any time since 17 February. Nor has she had contact with or made any inquiry about the children.
57. Within her position statement for 26 January hearing, written for her by Ms Sabine McNeill as she later revealed, the mother made a thinly veiled threat as to what would happen if the children "*were not returned to their mother and grandparents with immediate effect.*" Ms Draper stated that the consequence would be "*high level embarrassment.*" An open letter to Theresa May, the Home Secretary, posted on the internet, explicitly states that the Position Statement was "*our offer NOT to expose this scandal in exchange for returning the children.*"
58. The clear message from recent events is that whilst Ms Draper is prepared to campaign using the internet she is not willing to take part in this inquiry.

The mother's case

59. The mother's case is clearly stated within those documents filed by her. Within a document entitled, "*Summaries in support of the accusations made by my children,*" Ms Draper says this – "*The statements made ...are not only exceptionally serious, but also so outrageous that they are effectively unbelievable. Hence my then partner Abraham Christie and I talked to them separately on holidays to ensure that their allegations were the truth.*"
60. According to the mother, the "*most convincing argument of their believability is the utter consistency between what they are saying separately and together, on holiday, back home, when with Jean Clement Yaohirou on 04.09.14 and in the interviews with Barnet Police on 05.09.14 and 11.09.14.*" Ms Draper also contends that the medical reports "*clearly confirm sexual abuse over many months.*" She places emphasis on children having "*repeatedly expressed (their) fears of their father killing them, their nightmares and generally post traumatic stress.*"
61. In relation to the children's "*supposed retractions,*" the mother suggests they are inconsistent with their previous accounts over many weeks to different people. Neither their stories nor their body language on the police video of 17.09.14 are, she says, convincing.
62. Though it did not emerge in any detail from the children's police interviews, the mother's claims against the father of the most serious kinds of sexual abuse extend back to the time when P and Q were babies and include grotesque assertions of repeated interference. She also claims that Mr Dearman rather than Mr Christie was responsible for the assaults which led to physical signs of injury as found by Dr Hodes last September.

The father's response

63. Mr Dearman was taken in evidence to the entire series of sexual and other allegations made against him. He denied there was truth in anything suggested. He does accept that the breakdown of his relationship with the mother both at the time and subsequently was acrimonious. But, said Mr Dearman, "*There are two sides to the story. I'm not perfect. I'm a decent guy and a good father.*" Of the mother, he said this – "*When Ella is not doing crazy stuff she is a really beautiful person.*"

The law

64. The law in this area is well-known. There is only one standard of proof, namely the simple balance of probabilities. The burden of proof is on the party who makes the allegations: *Re B [2008] UKHL 35*. The 'inherent probability or improbability' of an event is a matter to be taken into account when weighing the probabilities and deciding whether, on balance, the event occurred – "*common sense, not law, requires that in deciding this question regard should be had to whatever extent appropriate to inherent probabilities.*"
65. Neither the seriousness of the allegation nor the seriousness of the consequences should make any difference to the standard of proof in determining the facts. In our legal system if a judge finds it more likely than not that something did take place, then

it is treated as having taken place. If he finds it more likely than not that it did not take place, then it is treated as not having taken place. He has to find for one side or the other. He is not allowed to sit on the fence. Sometimes the burden of proof will come to the rescue: the party with the burden of showing that something took place will not have satisfied him that it did. But generally speaking a judge is able to make up his mind where the truth lies without needing to rely upon the burden of proof.

66. As the then President, Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss, said in *Re T* [2004] 2FLR 838, “*Evidence cannot be evaluated and assessed in separate compartments. A judge in these difficult cases must have regard to the relevance of each piece of evidence to other evidence and to exercise an overview of the totality of the evidence in order to come to the conclusion whether the case put forward by the local authority has been made out to the required standard of proof.*”
67. There was an acceptance, on all sides, that it would not have been appropriate for either child to have given oral evidence. Applying the criteria set out in *Re W (Children) (Abuse : oral evidence)* [2010] UKSC 12, the uncontroversial answer to the essential test – as to whether justice can be done to all parties without further questioning of the child – is that it could.
68. Accordingly, it becomes necessary to consider how the hearsay evidence comprised within the children’s ABE interviews should be treated. It is admissible as a matter of law. Pursuant to s.4 of the Civil Evidence Act 1995, when estimating the weight to be given to hearsay evidence, the court must have regard to any circumstances from which any inference can reasonably be drawn as to the reliability or otherwise of the evidence. When a judge considers whether to rely on the statements of a child made to others ... the following factors, amongst others, are relevant – the child’s age; the context in which the statement had been made; the surrounding circumstances; the child’s previous behaviour; the child’s opportunities to have had knowledge from other sources; any knowledge of a child’s predisposition to tell untruths or fantasize.

The mobile phone recordings

69. The mobile ‘phone film clips made by the mother and Mr Christie form part of the material relied upon by Ms Draper to support the claims of exceptionally serious abuse. There are 16 short clips in all although 3 appear to be copies. It is useful to set out a reasonably full extract of the first film clip because of the way it sets the scene for the rest.
70. The children are standing at the side of a car in a public place, possibly at an airport. P and Q look tired. There is a noticeable graze on P’s chin and, seemingly, a large bruise in the centre of her forehead.
71. The conversation begins between the two children and Mr Christie. P and Q talk about deciding to stop touching each other and the children. P says they will “*face their fear – and face our urge – and stop touching ourselves.*” Mr Christie asks, “... *what else are you going to stop?*” Q replies, “*And stop killing babies.*” Mr Christie says, “*You’re going to face your fear? Because fear is what?*” P replies, “*Fear is the mind killer.*” Mr Christie then says, “*And you’re going to help us catch, who are you going to help us catch?*” Both children reply, “*All the paedophiles.*” P adds, “*Papa, Mr Hollings.*” Both children say, “*the school.*” Ms Draper interjects, “*All the*

policemen, all the – Social Services.” Mr Christie urges the children to “speak up, speak up.” The children then repeat, “All the Social Services” and add, “All the shopkeepers – Cafcass – all the cafes, all the Pizza Express – McDonalds.”

72. Mr Christie asks, “Who’s Cafcass? ... What’s Cafcass” P and Q reply, “Cafcass is, they work with – they’re for children – they work with Social Services.” Mr Christie asks, “And what did they do to you?” Both children, one after the other, respond, “They do sex ... They touch each other – they touch me and Q. They have plastic willies. And they stick it in our bottom.”
73. Mr Christie then asks the children to say who has done this. The children reply, “Everybody does.” In response to his direct questions, “Who, who, who?” the children say, “Papa, Mr Hollings – the school ...” The mother interjects, “Parents.” Q adds, “My dad’s family.” Mr Christie then says, “Tell me more people, tell me some more people because I’m interested.” P adds, “Parents, policemen –.”
74. Mr Christie asks, “What about the teachers at the school, who are the main ones?” The children give names and then they are asked what the head teacher does. Both reply simultaneously, “And she does sex.” Next Mr Christie asks, “And what happens in the church?” P replies, “And we do sex with the baby sacrifice and eat the baby.” Mr Christie asks what she means and she says, “So we kill the baby and eat it and drink the blood from it.” Mr Christie asks Q whether that is true. He replies, “Yes. And we dance with the skulls... Baby skulls.”
75. One of Mr Christie’s final questions is as to who kills the babies. Both children reply, “Papa.” Mr Christie then says, “And what, he gets you to help him?” Both children say, “Yes.” P adds, “So he tells us to hold our hand in a knife and then he holds his hand on our hand, so then he cuts the baby’s head off. And he tip it upside down and then we drain the blood.” Ms Draper asks, “And then what they do?” P replies, “And then we cook it and then we drink the blood and after we pick the bones, dance with the skulls...”
76. The other film clips are similar in that the interrogation of the children is undertaken in the main by Mr Christie with occasional interventions by Ms Draper. More and more information about the activities of the cult and the identities of those involved is recorded. In the second extract, the children are instructed to “Tell the camera.... Say what you said to the camera.” Ms Draper at one point says, “So what are we going to do? We’re going to protect other babies – and children, huh? And save those children who are involved or have been forced to be involved, right?”
77. The eighth clip starts with Mr Christie saying to Q, “Keep saying it to her.” It seems that he and the children are, by then, on a plane. Q then pleads with P to “Tell the truth.” He begs her saying, “P it’s really important. If you won’t tell the truth you’ll get yourself into big trouble ... so please tell the truth.” The tenth clip continues similarly, Q fervently pleads with P to tell the truth. He says, “Mum and Papa Hemp are protecting you and you have to help them protect yourself ... and to protect all of us because we’re in a group. If the group lies we’ll start to get wrong, things will start to happen wrong. And you might like, you might broke a glass, you might hurt yourself.” Mr Christie asks, “What about the babies?” Q replies, “And you might get your back your payment for the babies, you might get killed by someone.”

The 4 September recorded discussion between Abraham Christie and the children

78. The 4 September audio recording made by Jean Clement Yaohirou on his mobile 'phone is a key component of the material relevant to this inquiry. It provides an invaluable record of the interaction between Mr Christie and the children, the various prompts and instructions given by him to the children and, later, an insight into the mother's attitude towards the children's relationship with their father.
79. At the very beginning, Mr Christie instructs the children, "*Don't tell Jean Clement any lies ... Do you hear me?*" He continues, "*Otherwise we'll have to lock you up in the jail. Have you got room to lock her up tonight Jean Clement? Have you got room, yes or no?*" Mr Christie then laughs and says, "*So tell him what you said. You deserve to be locked up for killing the baby. Listen did you kill any babies?*"
80. One of the children replies "*No.*" Mr Christie asks, "*Who killed the babies?*" A child replies, "*Papa. Papa hold our hand... We put on our hand but we –*" Mr Christie then interrupts, saying "*No, he puts your hand on.*" The child continues, "*And then he puts his hand on ours, cuts off the baby's head. Because he's strong – .*" Mr Christie interrupts again, "*But he teaches you (inaudible).*"
81. Mr Christie then explains to Jean Clement Yaohirou in the presence of the children what this is all about. He says, "*... you don't understand what I'm telling you? They are killing babies wholesale, wholesale. They are killing them, they are drinking the blood and they are eating meat, and the skulls of the babies they are tying them, four skulls here, one here, two here, elbows here. And they are making, what about the shoes, this baby –*" One of the children says, "*Yeah, skin, baby skin shoes.*" Mr Christie asks "*Who makes the baby skin shoes?*" A man's name is given, and in response to the question as to whether he is a shoemaker, the child answers that he is.
82. There is a period early on when Mr Christie asks the children a series of quick fire questions, "*What about the doctor, is he one as well?*" Answer "*Yes.*" "*What about your headmistress, is she one as well?*" A. "*Yes*" Q. "*How many skulls does she wear when she's dancing?*" A. "*20.*" Q. "*So how many adults are involved then?*" A. "*So maybe like 400, 400 plus, 450, 430, something like that.*" Q. "*How many skulls do they wear?*" A. "*20.*" Mr Christie then says, "*So, there's over 400 adults and they're all wearing 20 skulls each. Can you do the maths? Over 800 (sic).*"
83. A little later on in the discussion with Mr Yaohirou, Mr Christie introduces the notion that the mother's three children are involved with "*this cult*". He said the mother had come to him because she knew he could help her, "*she didn't know how and (he, Mr Christie) didn't know how.*" Mr Christie then said, "*some of her friends that come to the house – they come to the house and they go to the school and they sex the children behind her back.*" Mr Yaohirou asks if everything happened in the school. Mr Christie replies, "*In the school, in the church and above at the swimming pool, at the local swimming pool.*" One of the children adds, "*In the house.*" Mr Christie goes on to say, "*Happens in school during school hours. You go there on a Wednesday and you will arrest them all. And you will take the children in the school because they do it to every child in the school and I guarantee you, out of the children, 100 of them will talk.*"

84. P then says, *“And they sell us for £50 each. So Papa sells me and Q.”* Mr Christie adds, *“At the parties. And 100 people do sex with them ... 200 times 50 is how much? 10 grand, I’ve done the maths already.... What else do they sell?”* One of the children starts to reply but is told to *“Shut up”* by Mr Christie who then says, *“He makes movies. He makes snuff movies of the babies and he sells them in the Ukraine, in Russia, in Brazil, in Portugal, in Brussels, in England, he sells them all over the world.”*
85. At times, Mr Christie sounded very agitated and aggressive, for example when he told Mr Yaohirou that they *“have to give the (children’s) passports back to the solicitor who is a member of the paedophile group;”* and also when he said *“... But we’re not going to let him (the father) see them (the children). We can’t let him see them. They (sic) will kill them.”*
86. A little later, there is discussion between Mr Christie and Mr Yaohirou about the court proceedings between the mother and father. Mr Christie explains that Mr Dearman has taken the mother to court *“because he wants to see his children.”* Mr Christie rhetorically asks, *“But why does he want to see them? To do sex to them, to make party, to sell them to other people and to make movies.... We cannot allow it to happen anymore. He must be arrested.”* Mr Christie then introduces the topic of *“Papa’s secret room”* asking one of the children to say what is done there. But nothing is said by either child.
87. There is evident pressure upon the children when, for example, Mr Christie asks, *“Has father got keys to the house.”* A. *“Yeah.”* Mr Christie says, *“Is it a lie? Is it a lie? We do not have time for lies.”*
88. Mr Christie is directive towards the children saying, *“Be quiet and go outside now, come on. Hurry up. Outside. Outside. Outside. I don’t play around, just stay there. That’s it. That’s right, discipline.”* And a little later, *“Sit round the table properly, son. Don’t let me tell you again, you sit down properly, thank you. Thank you. Don’t let me tell you again, sit down at the table properly.”* He adds a few minutes later, *“and you speak when you’re spoken to. You understand? Come on. Let’s have some respect ... let’s help each other and let’s make sure that no more children get killed, ay?”* One of the children adds, *“And make sure papa goes to jail.”*
89. When Ms Draper joined the discussion she initially concentrates upon establishing that a letter and some drawings have been seen by Mr Yaohirou. She also relates a lengthy history of the court proceedings saying she had not wanted *“to give (Mr Dearman) the children really.”* She had wanted to *“kind of limit (contact).”* She related the incidents when there was alleged domestic violence; and indicated that Mr Dearman had been *“fighting for this contact and (she) had been trying to limit it as much as possible.”* One of the children interjects when the mother is struggling to describe the frequency of contact, saying it is *“Every Saturday.”*
90. Ms Draper tells Mr Yaohirou of a problem she’s had with an upstairs neighbour who didn’t like it that there was a large trampoline in the communal garden. Mr Christie adds that the neighbour complained about *“just about anything.”* Ms Draper then says, *“Apparently the same lady, she’s part of this cult as well.”* There is then a discussion between one of the children and Mr Christie in which the child is asked, *“Did that old lady upstairs abuse you? She never touched you did she?”* A. *“No but Papa is friends*

with her ... they met each other.” Mr Christie responds, “*Papa is friends with her but she does not have an appetite for children?*” A. “*No.*” Mr Christie then says, “*She just, in fact she’s just an associate of the cult and she helps them and they help her.*” One of the children chip in, “*She doesn’t really like children.*”

91. In response to Mr Yaohirou’s question as to whether the neighbour attended the meeting, Ms Draper replied, “*She was in the parties, you know, these fun set (?sex) parties.*” She then asked the children, “*did she ... participate in, you know, killing babies and drink the blood and all this?*” One of the children replied, “*Yes, yes, yes, but she doesn’t, she doesn’t touch, like, she doesn’t go near the children – she does, sometimes drink the blood, she does.*”
92. About two thirds of the way through the discussion, Mr Christie and Ms Draper tells Mr Yaohirou that they had only “*discovered this ... four weeks ago.*” Mr Christie said he had his “*first suspicions – about almost two months ago – when he first heard (Mr Dearman’s) voice on the Skype.*” That was when he’d had his suspicions. Mr Yaohirou asked, “*Oh, from the tone of his voice?*” Mr Christie replied, “*Yes.*” He added, “*And also because of the clues ... from them touching the dog.*” P said, “*We’d be touching the dog’s privates.*” Mr Christie added, “*So another clue is I began to suspect heavily and then when we got to Morocco and I realised they were touching each other on a regular basis I said to them, ‘You guys are doing this regularly. How come no one’s caught you? Who else is touching you? Who is, I know someone else is touching you, you’ve learnt this from an adult, who is it? Who is it?’ And then they opened this bag [?]*”
93. Mr Christie described something of the way in which the children had been questioned saying of P, “*She lies, instinctively she lies.*” He had believed her story, so he told Mr Yaohirou, “*Because (he) had questioned her 10 times and then (he) would question him.*” They had questioned the children “*separately like the police do ...*” Ms Draper explained it had taken “*four weeks to get to the –*” Mr Christie adds, “*Ella and I, we will begin to discuss certain aspects of the situation – and by discussing it – we brainstorm and we come up or we work out, we work things out. What she (P) will do while we are talking, she will interrupt us – and distract us with something and send us, like attempt to send us in another complete – We say to her, ‘Be quiet ... Don’t distract us anymore*”
94. The mother interjects, “*Or she listen to our conversation. And she will –*” Mr Christie continues “*– use the information, and he does it as well.*”
95. Towards the end of the recording there is a passage when the children and Mr Christie are all shouting, excitedly, “*Kill, kill, kill.*” Mr Christie urges the children to “*Say it... Say it how they say it.*” A. “*Kill, kill, kill.*” Mr Christie, “*What’s the word that you say?*” A. “*Kill.*” Mr Christie, “*Say it more for me. I want to hear it.... I like the sound of it. Can you say it together, say it, let’s all say it together.*” There is then repeated chanting of the word “*Kill*” and a little later of the phrase, “*Kill the baby.*” Once more Mr Christie urges the children on saying, “*Let’s say it together. Let’s say it together. Kill the baby.*” And they do.
96. Mr Christie brings the discussion to a close saying that it is “*a quarter past one*” in the morning. He makes clear that he is tired, adding, “*Some of us have been working on this for a month full-time, some of us haven’t slept for a month.*”

Conclusions in relation to the film clips and audio recording

97. The recorded information just described – the film clips and the audio recording – are critically important in understanding how the children came to make their subsequent allegations in ABE interviews and elsewhere.
98. Any proper investigation of sexual abuse claims will necessarily focus on the circumstances surrounding the initial complaints. It is always essential to consider how and to whom they are made; the associated emotion, if any, on the part of the complainant; the response of the individual(s) who hear the first version of the allegation and the evolution of the story.
99. The person who has the most to contribute on the audio recording is Mr Christie. It seems from their interjections as though the children were present throughout as might be expected given that they were in Mr Yaohirou's house.
100. As for the very first indication of possible sexual abuse, Mr Christie's account to Mr Yaohirou is both extraordinary and significant. To entertain suspicions about Mr Dearman from the tone of his voice over a Skype call defies reason. Moreover, senseless assumptions would seem to have been made by Mr Christie and the mother if, in fact, the children had touched the dog and were "*touching each other.*" To believe that children who demonstrate curiosity about and touch their own, the dog's and their sibling's genital areas must have, or probably have, been sexually abused is plainly ridiculous. It either shows alarming ignorance about normal childish behaviour or, as is much more likely here, wilful determination to distort innocent activities into something sinister and depraved.
101. On Mr Christie's and Ms Draper's own account, the children were subjected to ten separate interrogations over a period of four weeks interspersed with 'brainstorming' sessions in which Mr Christie and Ms Draper came up with or worked out what they – and possibly the children – put forward as having happened. In the context of what P and Q later describe was done to them by Mr Christie in that four week period, it is clear that they were effectively persecuted so as to compel them to tell false stories.
102. There is every reason to conclude that over the course of the four weeks spent abroad last summer, the children's minds were filled with ever more elaborate, fantastical and sexually explicit stories. Over time, more and more detail was supplied to the central core of the fabricated story. '*Brainstorming*' brought about expanded versions of events. More and more individuals were named as participants within the cult. Venues for abusive activities grew in number, spread across Hampstead and Highgate. Ever more sexually explicit details were woven in to the fabric of the fantasies in an attempt to make the children's accounts believable and seemingly authentic.
103. By the time the children arrived at the airport for the journey back to England, at Mr Christie's and Ms Draper's instigation, they were able to 'speak to camera' about the stories concocted during the brainstorming. The obvious purpose of the film clips was to provide 'proof.' It was part of a deliberate plan by Mr Christie and Ms Draper. The children do as they are told. They do so forthrightly, without inhibition and with apparent conviction.

104. The key speakers within the audio recording made by Mr Yaohirou are Mr Christie and later Ms Draper. The majority of the information conveyed comes from or is prompted by them. The children are asked many, many leading questions. Most of the time, they are simply required to join in with the accounts being supplied by Mr Christie.
105. Even in the presence of Jean Clement Yaohirou, Mr Christie's relationship with the children, at times, was harsh and coercive. He had known their mother by then for about four months, had assumed a quasi parent role and taken it upon himself to enforce discipline.
106. Another significant feature of the audio recording relates to the intense animation generated by Mr Christie when he is urging the children to chant, over and over again, "*Kill the babies ... Kill, kill, kill ... Let's say it together ... I like the sound of it!*" The children, unsurprisingly, join in with the chanting and Mr Christie's evident excitement.
107. It is a curious fact that prior to the launch of these proceedings, no police officer had listened to the audio recording made by Jean Clement Yaohirou or watched the film clips of the children. DI Cannon made inquiries at my request to discover that DC Rogers, the member of his team who received the film clips and the audio recording from Mr Yaohirou, had sent them to a property store in Chingford. The focus would appear to have been upon arranging almost immediate ABE interviews.
108. I say no more at this stage than that the police and social services inquiry could have taken an entirely different course if attention had been given to those recordings. At the very least, the questions asked of P and Q at interview would have been directed towards other areas of interest.

The ABE interviews of 5 and 11 September

109. The ABE interviews of 5 and 11 September are remarkable for a number of reasons. Firstly because the children describe a number of detailed allegations of ritualistic abuse; and second because they do so articulately, with good eye contact and without a trace of distress. P can barely wait for the next question before she is chipping in with an answer. Both children are entirely 'matter of fact' about what they say has happened. There is no trace of any emotional arousal.
110. The children both describe killing and eating babies, drinking blood, being anally penetrated and being injected with drugs. They provide details of all the people who have been involved – all the teachers, parents of children at the school, social services. P says that the killing of babies is done with "*cleavers*"; the blood from the babies is poured into a "*silver bowl*" and she and her brother are "*sold for £50 each every single day.*" When P is asked what sex is, she initially says it's when they are hit with a big plastic stick between their legs. Then she says "*real sex is, like, they get plastic willies, they stick it in our bum, that's what kind of sex they do.*" When asked about the people involved in these activities, P suggests the police should "*catch the whole school, catch all the staff there.*" She adds a little later that "*all the Hampstead schools do it.*"

111. Q tells the police all about the plastic willies, who makes them and how his dad has the biggest because he's *"the boss of every single thing."* Q says that his bottom bleeds and that the last time this happened was on the last day of school when there was a big party. All the children, says Q, *"do sex to him;"* and at the end of the party his Dad *"kills babies and eats the meat."* Like P, Q suggests that *"all the teachers, (his) dad's friends ... and also the parents who are really mean"* to him are involved.
112. When P was re-interviewed by DC Martin on 11 September she described how Mr Christie would give her and Q *"soft licks ... it's like a spoon hit ... because we keep on lying ... the only way that we could tell is by him hurting us."* Asked what her Mum said about that, P answered, *"She thought it was a good idea. Because then after, when we had licks and we have water torture ... So us so that we could tell."* According to P, her Mum thought it was *"a good idea he gets loads of jugs of warm water – spills it on us, he says that he's blessing to do that so that (they) could tell."*
113. P also said that she and Q would call Mr Christie *"Papa Hemp"* and that they made soup out of *"you know the weed that you smoke ... it's real name is hemp."* She also gave many more details about the places where the killings of babies occurred as well as descriptions of the implements and objects used by the group. She seems completely immersed in the story as she described a secret room in the church where secret things are kept. She says, *"It just looks like ... patterned, patterned, like imagine this It's like, imagine there's this big like cupboard here – and it looks like a wardrobe. They've got loads of wooden patterns on ... they got a big key lock there."* The descriptions go on and on. P has a seemingly endless supply of information to convey. The more questions she's asked the more expansive she becomes.
114. Q's interview on the same day comprises explicit details of penetrative abuse upon him and sexual acts he was made to perform upon others. He gave an account of *"rubbing"* until *"the white stuff"* comes out of boys. Q continued, *"And it's really dangerous, my Mum told me never put it on a girl's privates because ... if I put it in my sister's privates she's create a baby ... but the baby would have a problem and it might be blind and it might walk like this and ... keep falling over... it might have no teeth"* Asked what the white stuff felt like, Q said it *"just feels like wee ... it's like a seed. ... You have to have a microscope to see it."* Q also said that *"lots"* of this white stuff came out of his willy, *"Like you can fill up like half of a bottle – a normal, like this big bottle."*
115. Like P, Q had no difficulty in supplying an endless stream of information about the activities of the group. He said the school nurse had given him a sleeping injection if he screamed too much. His father came to the school *"every day"* and *"he will do sex to us and they also do sex to the other children."* Like P, Q was able to supply a great deal of detail about secret rooms, cupboards, secret doors, locks, keys and killing babies in the kitchen.

Conclusions in relation to the 5 and 11 September interviews

116. Again and again, as I watched the interviews of 5 and 11 September my sense was that the children, for the most part, were in the realms of fantasy. There was an urgency and an excitement about what they were saying as the detail became ever more elaborate. It was as if they had been transported away from reality and into

dream land. There were obvious parallels in what P was saying with some aspects of the story line in C.S. Lewis' 'The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe.'

117. There was no change in the presentation of either child when they described apparently horrific acts as experienced by them and others. There did not appear to be any emotional connection with what they were saying except that they seemed energised.
118. The other significant deduction is that material supplied by P relating to the physical abuse of both children by Mr Christie in order to get them to talk should alert any sensible observer to the potential for false reporting.

The physical examinations and associated statements made by the children

119. Both children were examined on 12 and 16 September 2014 by Dr Hodes.
120. Arising out of the first examination, it was reported that P and Q had a number of scars and abrasions consistent with their assertions of having been physically abused by Mr Christie. The examination of P's perianal area was performed in the left lateral position – as recommended by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health Review of March 2008. Dr Hodes identified 3 linear scars extending almost to the anal verge as well as anal laxity after 10 seconds of gentle buttock traction. There was, she said, no reflex anal dilatation.
121. As for Q, Dr Hodes identified one anal fissure scar and no reflex anal dilatation. In relation to both children, Dr Hodes concluded there were physical signs which supported the children's allegations of physical and sexual abuse.
122. The second examinations occurred on 16 September. The resulting reports written that day, relate that the purpose was to meet the foster carer and children again for further history and medical examination, as well as for police photography of the injuries. When she gave evidence, Dr Hodes described more of the rationale for asking to re-examine the children's genital areas. She said, "*I've got this allegation which has been made to several people...*" Dr Hodes had thought about it over the weekend and, "*on reflection believed (she) should have examined the children in the 'knee chest' position.*" She added, "*it's not what you do it's how you do it.*"
123. On 16 September, each child provided Dr Hodes with graphic details of how they claimed to have been sexually abused – including the use of Vaseline on their "*bottoms and willies.*" They both said they'd experienced bleeding afterwards and said they were given a wet tissue with which to wipe themselves.
124. Dr Hodes' further genital examination of P revealed, "*persistent reflex anal dilatation during buttock separation.*" The three linear healed scars were confirmed. In relation to Q, Dr Hodes "*confirms the physical findings of a scar in the anus from a healed fissure, consistent with inflicted injury from a blunt penetrating force that he has alleged.*"
125. Dr Hodes wrote a further report on 22 September, 5 days after the children had retracted their allegations. She repeated her physical findings and then comments upon the retraction in these terms – "*Until a study in 2007 it was mostly thought that*

recantation rates were related to the certainty with which child sexual abuse is substantiated and that retraction of true allegations is rare and that when retraction occurs the allegation is likely to be false. Lindsay et al found a recantation rate of 16.9% in 257 substantiated cases of CSA which had relied on formal interviews by police and social services. This is four times higher than previously reported in the most often cited study by Bradley and Wood in 1996. Analyses of their data found predictors for recantation included younger age child, a parent figure being the perpetrator and a lack of support from the non offending care giver.” In summary, said Dr Hodes, “recantation does occur in a significant number of cases especially with the predictors that are present in both children.”

126. In her concluding “Summary”, Dr Hodes states that both children have physical signs of sexual abuse that support their allegations; they have symptoms of post traumatic stress; and it is her opinion *“the extensive and detailed accounts given by both children, repeated to different professionals, contain details of sexual acts that such young children would need to have had some sort of direct experience (sic).”*
127. On 26 September, Dr Hodes and a Senior House Officer met with Ms Draper *“for further information regarding the children’s medical history.”* A little over two pages of the four page report are devoted to the *“allegations allegedly made by P and Q to their mother.”* The main focus of the interview was upon sexual complaints. Ms Draper claimed that Mr Dearman rather than Abraham Christie was responsible for the children’s physical injuries as documented by Dr Hodes.
128. Subsequently, Dr Hodes took this case to a peer review meeting. As explained in her Amended Medical Report of 4 December 2014, her anogenital findings in relation to both children were then significantly amended. The previously confirmed fissures were said to be irregularities in the ruggae (folds, wrinkles or ridges) and their clinical significance was described as *“possible normal variant.”*
129. The only persisting physical sign post peer review was reflex anal dilatation in P which, so Dr Hodes, maintains is *“consistent with her allegation of the blunt penetrating force to her anus i.e. sexual abuse.”* In evidence she referred to her colleagues agreeing it was *“abnormal and striking.”* It is a sign which is *“rarely seen.”* In her written report she also said, *“There is evidence in the literature that the absence of physical signs neither supports not (sic) refutes an allegation of anal penetration. In this case it was alleged that lubrication was used which adds to the probability of abuse.”*
130. Dr Hodes’ very last report – of 5 February 2015 – was written in response to written questions. She states that *“the overall situation is such that it is my view that the allegations / accounts need to be taken very seriously despite the confusing picture.”* Dr Hodes’ view is that whilst it is a matter for the court to decide, she recommends *“a series of more detailed observations and assessments over a longer period of time by a psychiatrist or psychotherapist with a particular interest and expertise in child maltreatment including sexual abuse.”*
131. Her oral evidence surrounding the importance of the physical sign found in P amounted to this – *“It was there – clear – it is rarely seen ... it is not diagnostic but is associated with anal abuse – part of the jigsaw.”*

Conclusions in relation to Dr Hodes' evidence

132. Overall, I feel impelled to observe that the level of Dr Hodes' involvement in this case was unusual. I remind myself of the several cautionary considerations when a court is considering the contributions made by experts as comprised within *Re U; Re B [2004] EWCA Civ 567* – i) The cause of an injury or an episode that cannot be explained scientifically remains equivocal. ... iv) The court must always be on guard against the over-dogmatic expert, the expert whose reputation or amour propre is at stake, or the expert who has developed a scientific prejudice.
133. I was dismayed to find, twenty seven years after the Report of the Inquiry into Child Abuse in Cleveland 1987 that Dr Hodes adopted so definite a view as to the likelihood of sexual abuse to which she then adhered notwithstanding several noteworthy contraindications. One of the cardinal messages from Cleveland was as to the importance of multi agency collaboration so as to understand amongst many other things the context in which suspicions arose.
134. In her very last report, Dr Hodes said that “*the current evidence is that prolonged reflex anal dilatation (the finding in P) is associated with anal abuse;*” and cited the Royal College of Paediatrics 2008 Review. The Review also reflects, I would observe, that there continues to be a debate about the significance of RAD. It is a sign seen in up to a third of children with a history of anal abuse although it can also be seen in small numbers of children selected for non abuse (the evidence base is very limited and unclear on this).
135. I was troubled too that the children were subjected to intimate examinations to search for further signs twice in five days. I regret that Dr Hodes was not asked exactly what she hoped to gain by the second examination positioning the children differently. The 2008 Review suggests, arising out of Myrhe's 2001 study, that there are differences in the muscle tone in the two positions.
136. I consider it unusual, to say the least, that Ms Draper was invited to discuss her version of the history at a lengthy separate interview with the paediatrician and her SHO at a time when the social work team as well as the police were undertaking inquiries.
137. I was perturbed that Dr Hodes was prepared to conclude and then confirm the presence of fissures when subsequent peer review resulted in them being described as a normal variant. Similarly, I found it curious that even although the physical signs had reduced in number to a single finding of RAD in P, nonetheless Dr Hodes adhered to her view saying that lubrication was used which “*added to the probability of abuse.*”
138. When confronted, in cross examination, with the evidence about Ms Draper's treatment of the children with enemas, Dr Hodes did not pause before saying, “*No, it does not affect my conclusions. It's another possible cause of trauma.*”
139. I was bemused by Dr Hodes' suggestion of further psychiatric or psychotherapeutic intervention when she knew that Dr Clare Sturge – one of the leading and most experienced child and adolescent psychiatrists in the country – had already supplied two reports, the first arising out of her assessment of the children after interview.

The 17 September retractions

140. DC Martin was asked to explain why the decision was made to interview the children again on 17 September. It is Ms Draper's case that between 11 and 17 September the police and the children's foster carers placed pressure upon them to change their story. DC Martin said that prior to collecting P and Q from the foster home he had not met either foster parent. DC Martin was accompanied by DC Carl Savage, who had not previously met the children. Neither of them had any conversation with the foster parents relating to the allegations. If anything of note had been said by anyone prior to the ABE interviews it would have been recorded.
141. The decision to have a third interview arose because "*of the sheer amount of stuff*" emerging from the second, said DC Martin, and for clarification. During the drive to the interviewing suite, according to DC Savage, the children had said something along the lines of '*they had made up the allegations and it was all to do with the Mask of Zorro.*'
142. As emerges from the interviews themselves, both P and Q did indeed withdraw their claims, all of them. P said that Abraham had told them what to say. She had told him that E, one of her female friends, had touched her – Abraham had said, "*No, it's your Dad.*" P said that "*it was all made up,*" everything about the school, the church, the swimming pool; none of it was true. Abraham, she said, "*had hurt (her) and used bad words ... ' a stupid little cunt'*". She was scared and worried. Her mother had not stopped Abraham "*because she loves him so much.*" P described him as "*an idiot.*" As for her father, P said he is "*fine and good.*"
143. Q's interview was initially somewhat confused. He said, "*Yeah there is still some of the babies killed ... Not much (are there babies killed).... I lied about it because he (Mr Christie) made me say it.*" A little later, Q said, "*None of it was real.... The plastic willies were not true.*" Abraham had "*slapped (his ear) as hard as he could.*" Q said, "*I hate Abraham*" and he did not want to see him again. He described how his mother "*would be really angry with (him).*"

Dr Sturge's assessment of the children

144. Dr Sturge assessed the children on 5 November 2014. P related that Mr Christie would tell her that "*for lying she would go to prison for 20 years and never see her grandparents or Mum again.*" P commented, "*Abraham loved my Mum so much. He even blamed her for being in the gang.*" He had kept on asking her, "*Any other people.*" He had threatened her with the spoon and poked her so hard in the chin with it that she had a big mark. When Abraham had asked her about plastic willies in her bottom, she had denied this. He had said, "*How come Q told me.*" The Vaseline had been, said P, Q's idea. He knew one of her friends used it (for her lips). P said, "*Thing is, Abraham came up with stuff we didn't know and came up with ideas too.*" Abraham was always saying Q was a good boy for telling him things and that she was lying and would go to jail.
145. Dr Sturge asked P what the word 'paedophile' means. P replied that Abraham had said her Dad is a paedophile and explained what it meant. P had only a minimal understanding of 'the facts of life' and sex was "*inappropriate stuff like touching each other in the privates.*" Dr Sturge asked P about living with her mother. She said, not at

the moment – “*I feel angry with her, letting Abraham do all that stuff to us.*” She had one question of Dr Sturge, could she live with her foster mother until she is 14 or 15?

146. Q responded immediately to Dr Sturge’s question as to whether he knew why she was seeing him. He said, “*cos Abraham said something I never did and he forced me to say it, he was really mean to us.*” Abraham had accused him of touching his sister in the private parts which he “*never, ever did.*” And he forced them to say their Dad touches them. Abraham had also forced them to say they kill babies. Q said he had wanted Abraham to stop hitting him, “*I was scared for him to hit me.*” At that Q’s face creased up and he began to cry quietly. “*He kept asking us questions again, and again and again.*” His mother had started to believe him. Q said, “*It upsetted me*” and he became even more distressed.
147. Q described how Abraham had been asking them all day. He had even woken them up and hit them. The hitting was if they didn’t wake up and talk. Asked how his mother had reacted, Q said “*she didn’t mind.*” He was asked about living with his mother and replied that “*if she still believes it, (he) wouldn’t want to live with her.*” Later he described with great vehemence that he would never live with his Mum while Abraham was still in the British Isles. She would just phone him and he’d come to their house. Q also said, spontaneously, that he hates Abraham, describing him as “*the worst person I’ve ever met.*”
148. Dr Sturge asked Q directly about Vaseline. He said, “*He (Abraham) forced me to say my Dad puts Vaseline on my willy – plastic and normal ones.*” Q added, as if puzzled, that Vaseline is used to rub on your hands when they are sore. He was clear that Abraham had used the Vaseline word first. Asked about seeing willies, Q said he and a friend at school had shown each other their willies in the toilet.
149. Q was distressed again when talking about having to stand when cold water was poured on him – “*(dressed) just in our pants – he thought we was lying – when I cried and said my Mum never touched us, he said, ‘If you’re crying you’re lying.’*” By then, according to Dr Sturge, Q was crying in a very distressed way.

Demeanour on 17 September and during assessment by Dr Sturge

150. The children’s demeanour during the 17 September interview with the police and in their discussion with Dr Sturge is a factor of relevance to the inquiry.
151. It seemed to me that on 17 September P in particular was relieved to be unburdening herself and revealing the truth. Some of the ongoing and quite complex processes in Q’s mind were manifest. At the outset, it seemed as though he was still confused but gradually he, too, became clear in saying he had been forced to make untrue claims. There was none of the frantic scramble to provide answers to questions as in the earlier interviews. Both children were a great deal calmer.
152. Q was evidently and genuinely connected on an emotional level with the content of his revelations to Dr Sturge.

Overall conclusions in relation to Ms Draper’s allegations

153. In addition to my findings already made both within the opening paragraphs of the judgment and subsequently it is necessary to consider how and the extent to which the children have been harmed.
154. Both P and Q have suffered significantly. Their innocence was invaded. Their minds were scrambled. Their grip on reality was imperilled. They were introduced to sexual practices of which they had no real understanding at a time when they should have been shielded from such things.
155. Perhaps most significantly of all, the children were made to absorb and repeat on film and in interview grotesque claims against so many blameless people including the father whom they love.
156. I have no doubt but that the physical injuries described by the children as having been inflicted by Abraham Christie were, indeed, caused by him. I reject as baseless Ms Draper's suggestion that instead Mr Dearman was responsible. A straightforward conclusion given that neither child had seen him for about three months at the time of Dr Hodes' examination and subsequent police photography. Those photographs clearly show recent rather than healed injuries.
157. There is good evidence to find, as I do, that in the three months leading to their reception into care both children ingested cannabis. Scientific analysis revealed that both children had metabolites of the drug (THC) in their hair – a finding which could not be explained by ingestion of 'hemp based products' because none would contain sufficient levels of cannabis to produce the metabolite. It is impossible for the analysts to say whether the children had ingested the drug whether by passive smoking or oral ingestion. However, the children were clear in interview when describing the way hemp was made into soup using the juicer.
158. The amounts found in the children's hair samples suggested their ingestion had not been, as Ms Cave of Lextox described, a "one-off" but regular over the period. It is hard to imagine how any parent could deliberately expose a child to an illegal drug. But it may have been part of Mr Christie's and Ms Draper's plan so as to gain the children's compliance. I need hardly say now profoundly damaging it was to administer illegal drugs to a child.
159. The posting of film clips featuring the children speaking about sexual matters has exposed P and Q to the potential for very serious embarrassment and humiliation in the years ahead maybe, even, throughout the whole of the rest of their lives. Doubtless they will grow and develop so that their visual appearances will alter. But it may be difficult to shield them from unwelcome interest and reputational damage unless radical steps to divert attention are taken.

Final thoughts about the investigation

160. If there is one key message at the end of this inquiry it is that it is not and never will be sufficient to consider just one or two evidential features in isolation. It is always necessary to take account of all the material not just a selection. Those who arrived at their own early conclusions on the basis of partial material were woefully misguided.

161. The individuals who have watched online film clips, read online articles and believed in the allegations would do well to reflect that ‘things may not be what they seem’ and that it is all too easy to be duped on the basis of partial information. There are many campaigning people, sadly, who derive satisfaction from spreading their own poisonous version of history irrespective of whether it is true or not.
162. Proper consideration should always be given to the context within which allegations are made. In this instance, years of court conflict over the issue of contact and Ms Draper’s antipathy for Mr Dearman provided fertile territory for the creation of false allegations and their reiteration by the children.
163. The history of the key protagonists may also play a part in untangling the intrigue so as to get at the truth. Mr Christie has a background of criminality for drugs offences, violence and dishonesty. More recently, he received a police caution for assaulting his adolescent son.
164. Finally, that it is never possible to predict how a court inquiry of this kind will unfold. Against the preconceptions of many including my own, when the maternal grandparents gave evidence on 4 March 2015 they made their views about the allegations plain. They consider them to be “total nonsense and fantasies.”
165. This is a summary of my salient findings –
 - Neither child has been sexually abused by any of the following – Ricky Dearman, teachers at Christchurch Primary School Hampstead, the parents of students at that school, the priest at the adjacent church, teachers at any of the Hampstead or Highgate schools, members of the Metropolitan Police, social workers employed by the London Borough of Camden, officers of Cafcass or anyone else mentioned by Ms Draper or Mr Christie.
 - The children’s half brother, his father and stepmother – Will and Sarah Draper – are likewise exonerated of any illicit or abusive acts involving the children.
 - There was no satanic or other cult at which babies were murdered and children were sexually abused.
 - All of the material promulgated by Ms Draper now published on the internet is nothing other than utter nonsense.
 - The children’s false stories came about as the result of relentless emotional and psychological pressure as well as significant physical abuse. Torture is the most accurate way to describe what was done by Mr Christie in collaboration with Ms Draper.
 - Both children were assaulted by Mr Christie by being hit with a metal spoon on multiple occasions over their head and legs, by being pushed into walls, punched, pinched and kicked. Water was poured over them as they knelt semi-clothed.
 - The long term emotional and psychological harm of what was done to the children is incalculable. The impact of the internet campaign is likely to have the most devastating consequences for P and Q.