

THE DAME JANET SMITH REVIEW

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
DAME JANET SMITH**

25 FEBRUARY 2016

The Dame Janet Smith Review

Ladies and gentlemen.

This morning, the BBC publishes the Report of my investigation into Jimmy Savile and the Report of Dame Linda Dobbs of her investigation into Stuart Hall in connection with their work at the BBC.

Savile and Stuart Hall were serial sexual predators. Savile was a danger to young people (both girls and boys), opportunistic and shameless. I have identified 72 BBC victims of Savile of whom 34 were under the age of 16. His youngest victim was aged 8. His abuse included 8 cases of rape, the youngest victim being only 10 years old.

Stuart Hall targeted and groomed young girls, often plying them with alcohol. Dame Linda identified 21 victims of abuse of whom 8 were girls under the age of 16 – the youngest was 10.

Both of these men used their fame and positions as BBC celebrities to abuse the vulnerable. They must be condemned for their monstrous behaviour. But, the culture of the BBC certainly enabled both Savile and Stuart Hall to go undetected for decades. I have identified five occasions when the BBC missed an opportunity to uncover their misconduct.

I want to leave ample time for questions, so I intend, in these opening remarks to address only three central matters. These are the complicit effect of BBC culture, the question of who at the BBC could have done something to stop Savile and Stuart Hall and finally, I want to speak to and about the victims.

But before that I want to deal head on with criticisms that have arisen during recent weeks. First, at no point has the BBC ever sought to influence the Review either as to the content of my Report or as to the date of publication. And, if it had, I would have paid no heed. Second, the delay following the completion of the Report in April 2015 was due solely to the concerns expressed by the Metropolitan Police who feared that publication might prejudice their ongoing investigations. There was no other reason.

I come to the first of my three main points: the features of the culture of the BBC which enabled Savile and Stuart Hall to hide for decades - and for which I must criticise the BBC. There was a culture of not complaining or of raising concerns. BBC staff felt – and were sometimes told – that it was not in their best interests to pursue a complaint. Loyalty to and pride in a programme could hinder the sharing of concerns; there was a reluctance to rock the boat.

The management structure of the BBC was not only hierarchical but deeply deferential. Staff were reluctant to speak out to their managers because they felt it was not their place to do so. Also there was a culture of separation, competition and even hostility between different parts of the BBC so that concerns arising in one part would not be discussed with another.

There was also a macho culture – in particular in Radio 1 and Light Entertainment. There were very few women in management positions. Women found it difficult to report sexual harassment.

All the problems of reporting were compounded in the case of the Talent. Celebrities were treated with kid gloves and were virtually untouchable. One witness told me that the Talent were more valuable to the BBC than the BBC's own values.

If these cultural factors had not existed, there would have been a real chance of Savile and Stuart Hall being discovered. I do recognise that many of these factors were common in the British workplace and some still are. But these are all matters which the BBC must now address.

Most important of all, in the 1970s, 80s and 90s, child protection was very low on the BBC's radar. In this, the BBC was far from alone. At that time, our society did not recognise the prevalence of sexual abuse of

children; complaints were disbelieved and therefore rarely made. We were not sufficiently shocked by the signs of older men being sexually involved with teenage girls and we were unaware of the damage which such unequal relations could cause. Sexual harassment was not taken seriously. The BBC's attitude to child protection might have been understandable but for one exceptional factor which makes it deeply disturbing. This related to Top of the Pops.

In 1971, there were allegations in the press about young girls being picked up for sexual purposes on Top of the Pops and pornographic pictures being taken after the show. There were also press allegations of corruption.

The reaction of the BBC is illuminating. It investigated the corruption allegations thoroughly. But it did not investigate the allegations about the young girls with anything like the same focus. It was plainly concerned about its reputation but was not concerned to the same degree about what should have been a wake- up call that there were young girls who might be exposed to moral danger on Top of the Pops. The BBC seemed to regard the young audiences as necessary but a nuisance. One note of a management meeting describes the girls as "unbalanced". There was no sense that they were young and in need of protection.

So, when complaints were made about Savile by two teenage girls who were assaulted on Top of the Pops, their complaints were not recorded or passed upwards to management as they should have been; instead they were brushed aside. One girl was told to move out of the way of the camera and the other was ejected from the building and left on the street. The failure to heed these complaints about Savile amounted to two missed opportunities to detect and stop him.

I cannot say that proper investigation of these complaints would have resulted in prosecution, but the BBC would at least have become aware of Savile's nature.

I turn to my next main point. Who at the BBC could have done something about Jimmy Savile and Stuart Hall?

In respect of Savile, there were three individuals. The first was **Ted Beston**, who was Savile's BBC Radio 1 producer. On one occasion, he was prepared to act as a provider of a young woman to Savile for sex. I found that he knew that Savile would have casual sex with teenage girls as and when he could get it. Although he denied it, I am satisfied that Mr Beston must have realised, from their appearance, that some of the girls might well be underage. He admired Savile and I do not think it ever crossed his mind that he should report him. But he should have done.

The second was **Canon Colin Semper**. He was a producer in the Religious Broadcasting department and worked closely with Savile. With commendable honesty, when giving evidence to the Review, he accepted that he had come to think that Savile had casual sex with a lot of girls, some of whom might have been underage. He did not discuss what he knew with his managers because he thought that they already knew about Savile and did not seem to be concerned about it. In my view, he should have discussed his concerns with his line manager. I think he now deeply regrets that he did not.

The third is **Douglas Muggeridge**, the Controller of Radio 1 and Radio 2 in the early 1970s. Mr Muggeridge died many years ago. In 1973, he heard rumours about Savile's sexual activities and prompted some enquiries. Savile was asked about the rumours and denied them. I think Mr Muggeridge genuinely believed the rumours to be untrue. However, in my view, he should have retained his concerns, shared them with colleagues and had a watch kept on Savile. Had he done so, Savile might well have been uncovered in the 1970s. This was a third missed opportunity.

Although I have found that none of Savile's senior managers in television were aware of his sexual misconduct, I do criticise them in another important respect. By 1983, there was a good deal of material in the

public domain which showed Savile in a bad light. Whatever the truth about him, this material showed Savile boasting of past associations with violent criminals and proud to be described as having a prolific, casual sex life with young women many decades younger than himself. It is amazing that it never occurred to Savile's managers at the BBC that, on account of this, they should not give him a platform to promote his image as a good man. It is amazing that it never occurred to them that Savile was not a suitable role model for the young audiences of Jim'll Fix It.

In Manchester, there were two individuals who could have done something to stop Stuart Hall - Raymond Colley and Tom German.

Raymond Colley was the Regional Television Manager in Manchester from 1970 until 1986. Dame Linda found that, when Mr Colley took up his post, he challenged Stuart Hall about rumours that he was having sex with women in his dressing room. These rumours did not suggest that these were underage girls. Mr Colley warned Stuart Hall as to his future conduct. But he did not follow up his warning. He assumed that Stuart Hall would desist. He overestimated his own authority and underestimated Stuart Hall's duplicity. Had Mr Colley kept a watch on Hall, it is likely that he could have been stopped. This was the first missed opportunity in respect of Stuart Hall – the fourth overall.

Mr German was the News Editor in Manchester during the 1970s and 80s. He is dead. Dame Linda has concluded that he was probably aware that Stuart Hall was involved in inappropriate sexual conduct on BBC premises. If he was, it seems to me that he should have shared his concerns with Mr Colley. He did not do so and this may well have been the fifth missed opportunity.

This Report makes sorry reading for the BBC. Dame Linda and I have found disturbing things and have not hesitated to expose them. From a conversation I had with Lord Hall on Tuesday, after he had read my Report, I am satisfied that he entirely accepts that there is much work ahead for him, the BBC Trust and the Executive Board if the BBC is to regain the confidence of the public in respect of its culture and its child protection practices.

I wish now to speak about the victims. I must record my annoyance at the complete disregard of their welfare shown by a website that chose to publish parts of an early draft of my Report. This unexpected and selective publication was highly distressing for them and had no public interest justification whatsoever.

I want to thank every witness who gave evidence to me and to Dame Linda but, above all, I want to send a personal message to the victims of Savile and Stuart Hall, many of whom will be listening.

Thank you for your contribution and your courage. Some of you have told me and Dame Linda that you blame yourselves for what happened and for not reporting it at the time. You are **not** to blame and your reasons for not reporting are completely understandable.

I know that it was very difficult for you to speak to the Review. You did so to help us to understand what had happened and why it was not discovered. Society owes you a great debt.

Your legacy is that you have helped to convince us all of the importance of ensuring that young and vulnerable people have the confidence to report abuse and that when they do so, their voices will be heard and treated with the same respect as those who hold power in our society. I think that is a legacy of which you can be justifiably proud.

DAME JANET SMITH

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