

# Pell's Acquittal: Victims' Right of Reply!

Warning: this article contains details of child sexual abuse which some people might find distressing, upsetting and triggering.

On Monday April 13, 2020 The Chronicle allowed Andrew Bolt a whole page to vehemently express his opinion on the treatment, arrest, hearings, criminal trials, jailing, appeals, and finally the release of George Pell on April 7.

Andrew Bolt, so self-opinionated, full of hate for the legal system, the Victoria Police, the media, the victims of childhood sexual abuse and their families, spruiked nothing but unfounded diatribe, not for any real reason other than that he was a staunch supporter of Pell – a mate of his!

As an abuse victim survivor campaigner and advocate (now living in Toowoomba, Queensland but formerly of Ballarat, Victoria) I believe the media owes it to victims, their families and support organisations to allow space for a firm right of reply.

In essence Bolt maintains Pell was innocent of all charges but failed to note that Pell was only acquitted of his "ludicrous conviction" (as he put it) by the Australian High Court due to 'legal technicalities'.

Bolt stated that "Pell was innocent; the charges against him were so far-fetched; the conviction was ludicrous; there was a "get-Pell" agenda; that Pell suffered; Victoria Police acted with extreme prejudice; Police assumed without proof that Pell was probably a child abuser; that Pell was a scapegoat; victims created false memories; the ABC led a witch hunt - that the things Pell was accused of could not have happened!"

The decision by the Australian High Court to grant Pell's appeal, to overturn a 'unanimous' guilty verdict and quash his conviction for historical child sexual abuse has stunned, shocked, absolutely gutted and re-traumatized many victims of childhood sexual abuse whose suffering still remains raw, unresolved and goes unrecognised. For many this will be, and is, the last straw!

And for those who live with the legacy of childhood sexual abuse committed within the sanctum of the church and the confines of state system, the High Court's decision is a blow to their faith in a criminal justice system they had just started to trust.

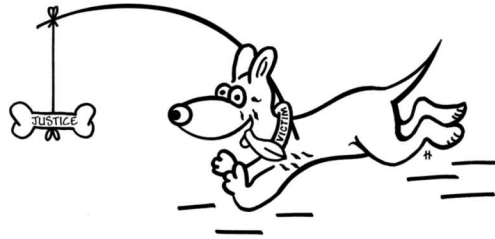
There is no appeal for victims and their families who are living a life sentence and suffering every day.

What has happened is an affront and hurts many victims and survivors who are constantly silenced by the powers that be.

Those in a position to help victims and survivors are too gutless to publicly voice a contrary opinion, print or say anything against the system for fear of some sort of retribution - social, legal or financial reprisal.

The media, which should be an open forum that encourages all forms of discussion and healthy community debate, seems more concerned with revenue security and profits than the views of the silent majority. Victims are effectively gagged and have no voice, no avenue to publicly express their views, no opportunity to give their opinions – they are censored then censored!

There is a lot of cold desperation, frustration and animosity out there among the many distraught victims and survivors of childhood sexual abuse with many victims feeling ignored, disrespected and left with no confidence in any investigative, legal, judiciary and compensatory proceedings.



***"This About Sums-Up Justice for Childhood Sexual Abuse Victims and Survivors!"***

With their hopes for justice dashed by the system, many victims of crime see the law as an ass that only seems to serve the guilty; especially those high profile personages in positions of authority and trust: actors, priests, scout leaders, politicians and teachers, etc.

As far as many victims are concerned the judiciary is part of a shady system, as bad as the offenders themselves.

The system put children in harm's way and on the menu for paedophile priests, clerics and teachers, et al.; the system allowed the abuse to occur; the system accepted no responsibility for what happened; the system covered things up, and now the system ensures that no one is held accountable.

For countless victims their lives have spiralled out of control and many have taken their lives unable to face life, live and cope with the shame and embarrassment of what happened to them back then; more importantly all they have endured and what has happened to them over the years since.

The defence argued that Pell was erroneously convicted on the unsubstantiated and fantastical allegations and lies of a vexatious individual; that any hope of a fair trial was impossible because the jury was poisoned by the media circus; that there was no, insufficient, or plausible physical evidence, and that there was strong, credible and undisputable alibi proofs that weren't presented to the jury so they could impartially deliberate their verdict. Well, nothing could be further from the truth.

Where victims of sexual abuse make a formal statement to Police, the content is vetted, evidence is gathered to support or strike-out allegations, and many professionals such as Police, social workers, psychologists, medicos, et al. are involved in appraising, weighing-up and challenging the evidence against thresholds of probability, likelihood and actuality.

As to the claim "there was no physical evidence" – well what do you call a victim? A victim is a living and speaking physical being capable of experiencing life, expressing emotions, creating memories and remembering things.

A child victim can often remember many things – even 30, 40, or 50 years later - including circumstances, situations, sights, actions, smells, odour, clothing and locations.

A child victim can well remember who stuck their thing into their privates, and what he or she was made, coerced or forced to do.

For some to even suggest that there are individuals out there who just wake up one morning and say out-of-the-blue, "hey - I was sexually abused 20 or so years ago and I am going to make allegations against so-and-so" is just preposterous! Nothing could be further from the truth.

It takes great courage and strength to wake up that one morning and decide to do something about what happened to you.

Do you think it is easy reliving such horrible events and circumstances; being interviewed by police time and again; attending hearings and a trial where you the victim are the one grilled in every detail; being hauled over the coals and re-traumatized? The odds are so stacked against victims.

Bolt argued that it is highly improbable and bizarre to suggest and believe a man could sexually abuse a child for "three minutes" in a public place.

Many rape victims have reported that violent acts of sexual assault can be over and done with in minutes!

A lustful and habitual perpetrator who harbours dark and deviant desires to molest a child is a scheming hunter who is more than able and experienced at calculating the potential personal risks to them and their perverted rewards.

As a person who had the good fortune of living in Ballarat during those dark days and the misfortune of having a direct association with a well-known Christian Brother's College and notorious paedophile infested primary schools in the 1970s and 1980s, I can tell you quite categorically that what many perceive as the far-fetched stories of endemic abuse and impossible memories and fantasies of so-called victims really happened. I was there!

If you weren't there, then to you and all of those who support the likes of Pell, I say you have no right to pass judgement on victims and survivors in favour of disgraced clergymen and others.

Who, or what perpetrators are now, may not well be the case of what they were back then. You have really got no idea, as your thoughts and opinions are devoid of any experience or facts.

And I give no apology for the analogy that victims have been screwed over yet again!

**If you, or someone you know has been the victim of childhood sexual abuse, PLEASE reach out to seek help and get support! HELP is only a phone call away!**