



LITERACY
IN CRISIS

Barely
functioning,
literally

INSIGHT



GRACEFUL 8

ENTERTAINMENT

Stars shine
in new
Ocean's
movie



Weekend

THE DOMINION POST

Sexual abuse sufferer finally gets justice

The victim who would not give up

Court
Stuff reporter

After four years and 10 attempts at a trial, Tim* has finally got closure on his sexual abuse court case – but it was a hell of a journey.

Tim, whose true identity is suppressed, was 15 when he was sexually abused by Philip Griffith in 2010.

It was 2013 when he went to the police and Griffith was charged, and 2017 before Tim finally got to see him sentenced for his crimes.

“He got four years of freedom without being held accountable.” He encountered Griffith through the social networking site Bebo.

Tim had been kicked out of home and, at the time, Griffith was giving him attention.

After several conversations, Tim went to Griffith's apartment. Griffith had left him a blindfold in the kitchen with a note telling him to put it on and call out when he was done.

Tim was led to a bedroom and told to undress. He was told to lie on the bed and pretend he was asleep and to have sex with Griffith and a friend.

“I kind of knew it wasn't right,” he said. “It was gross and predatory and creepy and made me feel awful.”

For three years, he felt guilty because he had met up with Griffith, like it was his own fault.

Tim moved to Wellington and after learning a bit more about life and going to university. He knew what had happened to him was illegal and he went to the police.

“That was really hard for me but the police were really good.”

He did not know who Griffith was but he had a phone number and an email address.

Unknown to Tim, Griffith had another victim – Michael – who was 16 in 2006 when he also met Griffith through a social network.

Michael was hired to be a model and to have photos taken of him. He went to an apartment in Wellington, where he thought that a photo shoot was about to take place.

Michael was asked to strip down to his underwear and pose. Griffith then kissed him.

Detective Jana Peterson began the search for Griffith and found a profile online. He got in touch with Trade Me's police liaison officer.

After a search, the phone number was traced back to Griffith.

Nine charges relating to the two men were laid against Griffith in July 2013, including indecent assault and facilitating sexual connection with a young person.

“I didn't feel like they cared ... I felt confusion at the court.”

Tim

But it took until September 2017 and four attempts at sentencing before Griffith was finally given a year's home detention after pleading guilty to six of those charges.

Name suppression, which lasted all of that time, finally came off.

“After the first failed jury trial callover, I thought about wanting to drop off the radar but his stalling tactics made me more determined to see it through,” Tim said.

Ten failed attempts

The first trial was set down for October 2014. By 2017, there had been 10 failed attempts to bring the case to trial. Tim sometimes felt the excuses did not add up.

“He said he was sick and was supposed to give a doctor's certificate. Sometimes he relied on the same one he had previous used or would not turn up.”

Meanwhile, Tim came to every court hearing, taking days off work and flying to Auckland after the case was transferred there.

Tim feels let down by the system, partly because of the delay but also because of the difficulty in getting information and sometimes misinformation.

He went to one hearing at Auckland District Court, where he believed the case was scheduled for

10.30am. It turned out it was 9.30am and no-one had told him. He had to knock on the courtroom door.

“I didn't feel like they cared ... I felt confusion at the court. I was wandering around wondering if I was missing something.”

He said it was particularly bad in Auckland, where he felt no support. “It felt like re-shaming.”

It took so long to resolve that the Justice Ministry, who can help victims out with costs, ran out of money for him and the other victim.

“It was one of the things of biggest closure to me was to face him in court and tell him how he affected my life,” Tim said. “I'm emotionally exhausted, it was years of my life.”

More support needed

Sentencing judge Russell Collins said the case had been painfully delayed and Griffith's health was one reason.

The Justice Ministry's chief operating officer, Carl Crafar, said it was recognised more needed to be done to assist victims to reduce trauma and to better support them during the court process, especially when victims were involved in lengthy cases and trials.

“Delays to court proceeding are often outside our control, these can be caused by preparation of legal arguments, the availability of parties and witnesses, and in some cases, appeals to a higher jurisdiction.”

A new measure adopted by the ministry in 2016 aimed to resolve serious harm cases, including sexual violence, within a year by increasing monitoring within the registries and through regular reporting of the cases, he said.

Crafar said funding was provided to Victim Support to deliver services for victims of crimes. They could be eligible for financial grants through Victim Support to cover costs such as travel to court.

Victims can also apply to the Criminal Justice Assistance Reimbursement scheme for financial help.

*Tim's real name has been changed to protect his identity.

All Blacks fan pays it forward



Children from Activ8 and Alopha Wellness programme had the chance to meet All Blacks, Scott Barrett, Te Toiroa Tahuriorangi and Damian McKenzie yesterday. Pictured, Dave Newman organised the meet up.

ROSA WOODS/STUFF

Sport
Hamish Bidwell
hamish.bidwell@stuff.co.nz

Bad to the bone? Not likely.

Dave Newman's phone might burst into life to the strains of the old George Thorogood and the Destroyers classic, but there isn't a bad bone in the Ōtaki man's body.

Nor were there many dry eyes at New Zealand Rugby House yesterday when Newman made a host of dreams come true – not least his own. Newman won a New Zealand Rugby (NZR) competition in early January, although he thought it was a wind up at the time.

He'd entered *The Twelve Days Of Christmas* promotion the previous month, but forgot all about it over the festive season.

It wasn't just any competition either. Newman's prize was a trip for two to any All Blacks test in 2018, with three nights accommodation and expenses thrown in.

Having moved to New Zealand from England in 1972, the November 10 clash at Twickenham was the obvious option.

“But I kept looking at the title of the competition: The Twelve Days of Christmas,” Newman said.

So he did something no-one at



Children from Activ8 and Alopha Wellness program had the chance to meet All Blacks Scott Barrett, Te Toiroa Tahuriorangi and Damian McKenzie. Pictured, Te Toiroa Tahuriorangi signing jerseys.

NZR expected. He turned down their offer and made them one of his own. What if he took 12 children, of NZR's choosing, to the Westpac Stadium clash between the All Blacks and France?

“I can't give them shoes, I can't give them lunches every day, but I can give 12 kids something that they'll look forward to and remember for the rest of their lives,” Newman said.

“That, to me, is worth more than going overseas to Sydney, or wherever, to watch a game of football.” Long story short:

yesterday morning 12 children from the Activ8 and Alopha Wellness program arrived at NZR's headquarters a little unsure of what was about to happen.

The programme helps children, many of them Pasifika, who deal with anxiety and esteem and learning issues. It gives them the tools to slow themselves down and make good, calm decisions.

Once the formalities were complete, in walked All Blacks Damian McKenzie, Scott Barrett and Te Toiroa Tahuriorangi, to welcome the children to “Team All

Blacks” and answer questions and sign autographs.

From there it was off to the team's captain's run at Westpac Stadium, to meet all of the squad ahead of a very special honour today. It's customary for a child to run on with the match ball at big matches, but when the All Blacks meet France, 12 children will do that together.

When he thinks of the part he played in that, Newman gets a little teary-eyed.

“This is way beyond anything that I dreamed of, and to be honest, when you look at these All Blacks, they're making these kids feel at home and you can see the smiling faces,” he said.

Although it was seeing the children do something else that really tugged at Newman's heartstrings.

“When these guys sung, I was completely humbled. Those All Blacks must've felt the same as I do. It's very humbling when somebody sings to you.”

But no more than Newman deserved for his old-fashioned generosity. “I'll remember this for as long as I live and until I go, and it's something special, really special – special for me, special for these kids. I wanted to do something out of the ordinary, perhaps, and its turned into something nice.”

Weather TODAY Max: 15C Min: 11C

Despite the cloud and showers looming over Wellington, tonight promises to be a blackout for the French at Westpac Stadium. A18

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