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### **Tipping Points and the Accommodation of the Abuser: Ongoing Incestuous Abuse during Adulthood**

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#### **Abstract**

Until recently the widespread reality of ongoing incestuous abuse during adulthood had attracted no systematic research. The scientific literature was limited to the occasional case study and brief anecdotal references. This minimal literature was supplemented by biographical works written by or about victims of this form of abuse, and by press reports. With the advent of the Josef Fritzl case there was a very marked increase in the press reporting of such abuse, which in turn provided a reference point for more fine-grained data collection and scientific reporting. This paper introduces the subject of prolonged incest via the lens of organised abuse, summarises research on incestuous abuse and draws on multiple clinical examples to elucidate the mechanisms by which such abuse merges with, or develops into, variations of organised abuse, including that centred on the family, on prostitution, or on that involving abuse networks. The abuse practices, the net-working, and the ploys used to avoid prosecution practiced by the father perpetrating ongoing incestuous abuse during adulthood have much in common with other variants of organised sexual abuse.

#### **Keywords**

Organised abuse; incest; adulthood; abuse networks.

#### **Introduction**

Mental health researchers rarely take the lead in initially drawing attention to the existence of examples of endemic but, nevertheless, extreme forms of abuse existing within society. The issue rarely devolves to one of scientific capacity. Usually it is the press, reporting in an unsystematic way and not infrequently focusing on the sensational, that initially and patchily documents the existence of the various forms of extreme abuse. For example, the popular press had been reporting cases of incestuous abuse that extended into adulthood for the past one and a half centuries (Middleton 2014) before the first scientific study examining this far from rare phenomena via a representative group of such cases was finally published in recent times (Middleton 2013a). Concepts that were once not particularly conceptually connected – such as ongoing incest, organised abuse, slavery, sexual sadism and intergenerational abuse – can be

seen as related phenomena when viewed through the lens of a typical victim of ongoing incestuous abuse during adulthood.

This paper incorporates selected key findings from the author's previously published research on ongoing incestuous abuse during adulthood and advances the argument that such abuse almost invariably incorporates one or more forms of organised sexual abuse. In being able to describe the dynamics of such complex abuse scenarios, a necessary foundation has been a close examination of the press reporting of such abuse. Press reporting, based on court judgments or police media releases, puts beyond doubt the global existence of such abuse. However it has awaited scientific inquiry to document in more detail its complex dimensions. This paper draws together representative international examples of alleged or proven organised sexual abuse (mostly focused on children), some with origins dating back decades. This leads into an overview of research into ongoing incestuous abuse during adulthood, seen from the perspectives arising from published press accounts of such abuse and also from a clinical group of victims of such abuse.

The paper concludes with a discussion of the many commonalities regarding organised abuse, particularly focused on the particular example of ongoing incestuous abuse during adulthood and it finishes with a cautious optimism. In examining the various settings in which organised sexual abuse of children has been allowed to flourish, it is argued that those that perpetrate ongoing incest with adult children have much in common with the other perpetrators that jointly abuse children and use their collective ability to silence their victims. It is suggested that society's willingness to support victims and vigorously investigate such abuses, has begun to show signs of significant change in recent times.

### **The tipping point**

On 20 October 2011 Colonel Moammar Gaddafi was captured by the Libyan mujahedeen. While being filmed, an iron rod was shoved up his anus and he was then shot. Gaddafi portrayed himself as a good Muslim but in the wake of the Libyan revolution, the extent of his sexual crimes became apparent. His organised sexual abuse of women, men and children represented an industrial enterprise. Gaddafi shopped for his victims, mostly young girls, at weddings, schools and summits. His famous Amazonian Guard, used to bolster his public image as a feminist and supporter of equality for women, was a front as most of these women were also his sex slaves. The combination of high sexual appetite (involving sex with four different individuals a day as well as collecting pornography) and absolute power produced an enduring situation where, as Callahan (2013) puts it: '[i]t is fair to say the entire Libyan populace existed to sate his depraved appetites'. Many of his victims were hospitalised with internal injuries while others were tortured and murdered.

Gaddafi's extreme penchant for control, violence and sexual perversion, at the same time as cultivating a public image that was the diametric opposite, is a pattern that has been endlessly repeated by individuals who have access to the means to subdue their victims. In 2008 there was global reporting of the case of Josef Fritzl's 31 years of incestuous abuse of his daughter Elisabeth who spent 24 years locked in the now infamous 'dungeon', and who produced seven children, one of whom died three days after childbirth to be disposed of in Josef's incinerator (Marsh and Pancevski 2009). In sport-captivated USA, the arrest in 2011 of Jerry Sandusky, assistant coach of Pennsylvania State University's famous football team and his subsequent conviction on 45 counts of sexually abusing ten boys, revealed an institutional environment in which ongoing abuse had been evident for decades without anyone doing enough to expose it and bring it to an end (Thompson 2014).

Following the 2011 death of influential British media personality Jimmy Savile, over 500 people have been identified as being sexually abused by him. Savile has been described by Peter Watt,

of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Powell 2013) as ‘one of the most prolific sex offenders we have ever come across’. Known victims ranged in age from five to 75 years of age. His most recent victim was in 2009 when Savile was aged 82 (Greenwood and Robinson 2014). By July 2014, as part of Operation Yewtree that had been prompted by the Jimmy Savile abuse scandal, a total of 17 individuals including Gary Glitter and Australian entertainer Rolf Harris had been arrested, with eight subsequently being told they would face no further action (Miller 2014). The PR guru Max Clifford was the first individual to be convicted as a consequence of Operation Yewtree, when he was found guilty of indecently assaulting teenage girls as young as 15 over a period of nearly 20 years (Barrett 2014).

There have been enduring debates about identifying the point of maximum world oil production (‘peak oil’), the ‘tipping point’ of global warming, the point of world maximum population, the end of the US dollar as the world currency standard, and the emergence of a technological singularity (‘the spike’). Less acknowledged is the accumulation of hard-won data that represents a ‘tipping point’ of quite another sort: the point at which humanity begins to sufficiently cease accommodating the abuser. Only then can an accurate reckoning of the damage done to humankind by such individuals begin. These abusers gratify their needs for sexual satisfaction, control, exploitation or frank sadism by targeting those who are most vulnerable and generally least likely to access credible supports or legal redress. In modern times this has generally not been an issue about the non-availability of data but rather about humankind’s willingness to know.

There are a number of salient indicators that a tipping point of this sort is now emerging. The number of events listed above signify that a point of public consciousness has been attained from which retreat will be difficult. In the wake of extreme abuses carried out by high profile individuals such as Savile, Fritzl and Sandusky, it is evident that many individuals are capable of elaborately orchestrated double lives. Invariably in such cases, there are those who assisted the abusers and/or failed to protect the victims, a particular issue with the unfolding Catholic Church child sexual abuse scandal in Australia and elsewhere. The Victorian Parliament’s *Betrayal of Trust* report, published in November 2013, emphasised that in no Victorian case involving the Catholic Church did a Church representative report criminal conduct by its members to police (Crittenden 2013). If society’s moral custodians could mobilise so little regard for sexually abused children, it is entirely consistent that prominent child sexual abusers in general have used their position not only to access victims but also to silence them and others who were aware of the abuse.

The wealth and influence of many alleged perpetrators continues to affect the willingness of authorities to investigate and prosecute child sexual abuse.<sup>1</sup> Yet society has begun to grapple meaningfully with child abuse at national and international levels that is unprecedented. If indeed such a ‘tipping point’ has arrived, this paper argues that this congruently allows for the examination of one of the least researched but perhaps one of the most traumatic forms of child sexual abuse: prolonged incest; that is, where a father (rarely acting alone) sexually abuses a daughter/son from childhood into adulthood. Using cases of organised abuse to illustrate the dynamics of regimented, premeditated abuse by men in power, this paper argues that prolonged incest is symptomatic of broader patterns of collective denial and societal complicity in extremely traumatic abuse.

### **Organised abuse**

Organised abuse, by definition, involves groups of abusers. Aside from entering into an arrangement that ensures access to victims, having a common purpose brings with it the related need and associated ability to use the resources of the group to silence victims and thwart investigation of their crimes. The only way in which organised abuse can end is if society has the

will to mount an organised, sustained, and resourced response that makes it safe enough for victims to be effectively heard by those in authority.

*The Franklin Scandal*, based on seven years of research by Bryant (2009), is a thoroughly researched journalistic study of a high-level politically-connected nationally operating pedophile network in the United States in the 1980s. The *modus operandi* of the grouping, in which the shadowy Craig Spence and high-flying Republican Lawrence King were central figures, included the alleged secret filming of influential individuals partaking of drugs and sexually abusing children at Spence's Washington residence. The use of one-way mirrors and hidden cameras by brothel proprietors in Washington in order to exert influence through blackmail seems to have been well established by the time Spence and Lawrence seemingly adopted the practice (Stanford 2013; Vinson and Bryant 2014).

Bryant describes in detail how elements of the judiciary, law enforcement, the political system and the press sidelined all attempts to make the abusers accountable. At the same time witnesses were silenced or died suddenly in unusual circumstances. Bryant described the conceptual reorientation he personally experienced as his investigation of the Omaha-Washington oriented pedophile ring began to unfold:

It was then that I truly entered a parallel universe that encompasses the refined destruction of children along with its cover-up by the very state and federal authorities who have pledged to protect them from the depravity of evil men – a universe where lies masquerade as truth, shadows reflect light, and innocence is condemned. (Bryant 2012: 47)

It is becoming increasingly difficult to consign such investigations to the realm of 'conspiracy theorists', yet the layers of protection enjoyed by those who organise the sexual and other abuses of others can be virtually insurmountable. In the United Kingdom there has been a recent convergence of a number of facets of organised abuse. A decades-old scandal of organised sexual abuse of children involving ten current and former MPs had finally peaked in July 2014. This is when the British government, under sustained pressure from within and mindful of growing public concern, announced an unprecedented public inquiry into the processes that had resulted in little or no investigation of the MPs' alleged crimes. A second broader inquiry will examine how there was an apparent suppression for decades of child-abuse allegations against public officials (Hines 2014). One of the parliamentarians is the legendary Cyril Smith, undefeated in an election for over twenty years and knighted in 1988, who was once considered among the United Kingdom's most popular MPs (see Danczuk and Baker 2014).

Politicians are only one grouping of the individuals involved with such organised abuse. Other historical cases are being thrown up against a backdrop of contemporary groups of being prosecuted in various communities for the abuse and trafficking of children, including the rolling scandals of abuse by Catholic clergy. The high profile cases of Jimmy Savile and Rolf Harris have demonstrated that the powerful and well-connected can effectively groom an entire nation.

Multiple reports in the UK in recent years on the activities of groups of men sexually abusing girls in Rochdale, Telford and Oxford were to be dwarfed by the scale of organised abuse of children in the South Yorkshire community of Rotherham. A commissioned report by Professor Alexis Jay revealed in August 2014 that at least 1,400 girls, some as young as 11, were left to be abused by gangs of men, mostly of Pakistani origin, over a 16-year period, because authorities were too scared to acknowledge the existence of a race issue. Over a third of the abused children were already known to child protection authorities. Repeatedly, police treated victims and their families as if they were to blame for the abuse, while three previous separate reports between 2002 and 2006 warning about the scale of abuse were 'suppressed or ignored' by the Rotherham

council. Professor Alexis described what the numerous victims had been subjected to as ‘appalling’, adding: ‘[t]hey were raped by multiple perpetrators, trafficked to other towns and cities in the north of England, abducted, beaten and intimidated’. To ensure silence, child victims were terrorised with guns, doused with petrol and threatened with being set alight, or forced to watch violent rapes (Brooke and Infante 2014). Days after the release of Professor Jay’s report, Glasgow became the new focus of the gathering national storm when it was revealed that child protection officials had ‘repeatedly vetoed a Rotherham-style inquiry into grooming gangs despite damning evidence that dozens of vulnerable youngsters were being targeted for sex’. Indicative of a tipping point for national awareness, it was by this time openly discussed that: ‘[s]imilar gangs are thought to operate in many towns and cities across the UK, including north of the Border’ (Murray 2014).

While claims about ‘suggestibility’ or unreliability of the accounts of alleged victims of such organised abuse still surface, and while there are attempts to reframe such abuses as somehow being instigated by the victims, time and again a properly administered inquiry demonstrates large numbers of child victims and organised long-standing networks of adult abusers. Describing Cardinal Pell’s first appearance before the Australian Royal Commission, four-time Walkley award-winning journalist and biographer David Marr (2014) stated:

He began the day with little élan and ended with weary resolution ... The contest between church and state conducted on the seventeenth floor of the Governor Phillip Tower in Sydney in the last days of March 2014 ended in a significant win for the state. (Marr 2014: 190)

There was a hint that a tipping point has been reached when Cardinal George Pell made his second appearance before the Australian Royal Commission in August 2014 (this time via video-link). In this appearance he made his now infamous analogy that the Church bore no more responsibility for its priests’ sexual behaviour towards children than a trucking company might bear for its drivers sexually molesting women, and this in a country where the predatory careers of some Church-protected priests extended beyond 50 years. There was swift international outrage at the remarks (Counihan 2014). Generally speaking, organised abuse will take place anywhere it can take place and, once it becomes endemic, it can be so tenacious as to require a sustained national will for it to be halted.

### **Ongoing incestuous abuse during adulthood via the lens of organised abuse**

In traversing contemporary examples of organised sexual abuse, particularly that which focused on children, several general observations can be made. Engaging with organised sexual abuse, as Bryant (2009) observed, can feel as if human society does incorporate a parallel universe that is not readily identifiable due to active suppression of evidence of its existence by individuals who band together with similarly motivated individuals to facilitate their ongoing access to the object of their enduring sexual desire. Children in such a world are a commodity that is used and often replaced with singular rapidity.

The rich and powerful have particular advantages in ensuring the continued supply of victims. They are often in positions of high credibility. They can outsource the procurement or grooming functions, and they are well placed to intervene if someone who has not been sufficiently silenced inconveniently divulges to an authority some details of their subjection. Such power is amplified if they become networked with similarly powerful individuals who share the same proclivities and who have the same collective motivation to maintain an enduring cover-up. The consolidation of power and influence is of course the business of politics.

Given his celebrity status and his flaunted close connections with his country’s leaders and the Royal Family, it is readily apparent that a single child victim considering a formal complaint

against Jimmy Savile faced an insurmountable obstacle. When Mike McQueary, a graduate assistant at Penn State, discovered Jerry Sandusky seemingly in the process of sexually assaulting a boy and reported the incident to legendary coach Joe Paterno, nobody at the University contacted law enforcement, and more boys were abused. Cheit (2014: x) points out that ‘the Penn State case is filled with concern on the part of administrators about whether Sandusky was being treated “humanely”, with little or no regard for his possible victims’.

The ability to abuse is assisted by being organised while keeping it out of the public eye. This occurs by either isolating victims or, if they are brought together collectively, ensuring that the manipulation of their shame and fear maintains silence. Their sense of shame is enhanced if they are forced to perform sexual acts on each other. Humans are a social species and individuals form a wide variety of groupings around shared interests or beliefs. Within such groupings there are inevitably hierarchies and opportunities to elevate one’s status. Such dynamics are as apparent in groupings of sex abusers as they are within churches or professional societies.

Freud was the first to publicly forge the close link between child sexual abuse and hysteria but, by 1897, he was in the process of beginning what became an entrenched retraction, namely the concept of Oedipal Fantasy, a dominant preoccupation of psychoanalysis for most of the twentieth century. Bleuler’s 1911 broadening of Kraepelin’s conceptualisation of dementia praecox to that of ‘schizophrenia’ meant that large numbers of dissociative individuals with complex trauma syndromes were rebranded as psychotic. Lacking any substantive political grouping, those few who published on child sexual abuse or dissociative disorders before the 1970s found little engagement from their colleagues (Middleton, Dorahy and Moskowitz 2009).

The first phase of the modern era which has brought attention to the plight of those sexually abused as children is represented by the efforts of feminists working within the anti-rape movement in the 1970s (Whittier 2011). Emerging awareness about the true incidence of child sexual abuse and incest in particular, as well as a variety of forms of organised abuse and their collective serious consequences, occurred against a backdrop in which those associated with such abuses understandably had a vested interest in muddying the waters. Additionally, some vocal critics took extreme positions regarding the phenomena of recovered memories of trauma and the validity of dissociative disorders (see Dorahy et al. 2014) and they exploited any opportunity where trauma researchers made claims or speculations that went beyond the verifiable data.

As detailed elsewhere (Middleton 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2014), published accounts of extreme examples of ongoing incestuous abuse extending into adulthood that date back one and a half centuries have not infrequently been associated with the births of incestuously fathered children. Yet the caution that has surrounded the study of this particular variant of extreme abuse has been such that the first systematic attempt at describing its common features via a close-grained analysis of ten abused women occurred only recently (Middleton 2013a). It was apparent in a 1998 naturalistic study of 62 individuals with dissociative identity disorder (DID) that a substantial percentage (13 per cent) had continued to experience incestuous/physical abuse beyond their eighteenth birthday (Middleton and Butler 1998). Further examination of these reports by the author was prompted by the arrest and trial of Josef Fritzl and the proliferation of press accounts regarding examples of broadly similar abuse scenarios occurring across the globe. This allowed for an analysis of the common features of such abuse, albeit constrained by the brevity of some press accounts.

#### *Analysis of press reports of prolonged incest*

An extended and updated study of press reporting (Middleton 2014) included an examination of 51 cases from 25 countries that were reported in the English language press over six years commencing January 2007. Of the 51 cases, only six did not broadly conform to a ‘Fritzl-like’

pattern. The common characteristics of the Fritzl-like abuser – as synthesised from the international press descriptions – defines a psychologically dominating man capable of extreme violence who uses death threats to reinforce his ownership of daughters and other abuse victims. Many actively planned to make daughters pregnant and many thwarted the limited attempts by child safety authorities to investigate their activities and their daughter's unexplained progeny. Their daughters were literally treated as sexual slaves, forced to re-enact their father's sexual fantasies that, in turn, were frequently stimulated by a fascination with hard-core pornography. Such daughters were kept isolated and any potential boyfriends were warned off, even at gunpoint. (Eight different accounts describe the father using guns.) Frequently the daughter's mother absented herself for extended periods or simply left without taking any definitive action to protect her daughter(s) or any progeny who in turn became the object of further sexual abuse. Alternatively the mother would deny knowledge of incestuous abuse being carried out in their house for decades or, in some cases, they were a virtual prisoner as well. Some were active co-abusers.

Despite accounts being brief or despite it not being a subject that would be particularly considered, press reports on the international group of abusers made repeated references to the father involving others in the abuse occurring in their family. In some cases the pattern of abuse was multigenerational. In others, an uncle or other unspecified men took part in the abuse. In the case of the West German Detlef Spies, in addition to his own ongoing perpetration of abuse, he prostituted his daughter and his step-daughter (who gave birth to eight of his children). Lindolfo Thibes also forced his daughter to have sex with other men while he watched (Middleton 2014). Alicja Bartoszuk describes her attempted escape to her boyfriend's house:

That night my dad came. He broke in with an axe and my boyfriend was so scared he didn't even squeak and he never contacted me again. There were two men with my dad. And his brother was waiting in a car in the woods. (*Croatian Times* 2010)

None of the fathers reviewed in this study of press reports spontaneously desisted with their incestuous abuse and, even if arrested or even when paternity was established via DNA testing, would offer nothing that demonstrated empathy for their victims. But the same man prior to arrest could be outwardly sociable, gainfully employed, and the head of a large family grouping (Middleton 2014). Many such incestuous fathers subjected children to extreme sexual sadism.

New Zealand man Ronald Van Der Plaat sexually abused his daughter Tanjas Darke for 23 years, from 1969 to 1992. Pregnant at 12, she miscarried. Van Der Plaat would tie her ankles to the ceiling of their home in west Auckland and perform acts described by his sentencing judge as 'indescribable cruelty'. He took pleasure in the pain he inflicted and photographed it. He would put Tanjas' head in a specially constructed box which he padlocked before inflicting himself sexually on her. He would pour hot wax on her naked body. Yet outwardly he portrayed their relationship as a normal loving father-daughter bond and he was a volunteer Lifeline counsellor. The sheer extent of the violent propensity of her abuser is perhaps sampled in her own descriptions; for example: 'The beating had gone on for more than half an hour; he'd even cracked the glass of my watch. I lay curled up for a few minutes, agony wracking my body, half expecting him to come back' (Darke 2007: 163). Police who arrested Van Der Plaat in 1999 discovered hundreds of photos of Tanjas being sexually abused, as well as handcuffs, padlocks and bondage equipment (Hewitson 2001; Reid 2010). The presiding judge described Van Der Plaat's maintenance of his innocence as 'breathtaking arrogance', given the weight of evidence (*New Zealand Herald* 2000). Released from prison in 2010, Van Der Plaat's parole was revoked when he was found holding a little girl's hand at Auckland Museum in 2012. In his other hand was a soft cuddly toy (Gillies 2012).

Such cases continue to come to the attention of the international press. A recent example that, in its basic elements, is typical of Fritzl-like abuse and illustrative of the tenacious denials of such abusers, was that of 'Ulster's Fritzl' Alan 'Herbie' Curragh, who repeatedly raped his step-daughter Emma and his daughter Cathy over a period of nearly 20 years. Already serving a 13-year sentence for abusing Emma, Curragh was sentenced in April 2014 for the abuse of Cathy who, as a 17-year-old, gave birth to his child. Emma has recounted: 'I was about five or six when it started. He pulled out a gun, stuck it in my mouth and told me if I ever told anyone he would kill my mum and then me'. At the age of 14 Emma reported the abuse to police and shortly after tried to suicide. It was then that she told her mother: 'She ended up crashing a car, she couldn't handle it'.

In 2011 Curragh stood trial for abusing Emma but, in Emma's words, he had 'totally brainwashed' Cathy into believing they were in an intimate relationship. Curragh forced Cathy to take the stand against Emma in court. Cathy recounted, 'He told me what to say, word for word'. The jury failed to reach a verdict but it was at this point that the judge approved DNA testing on Cathy's three-year-old son. The testing confirmed Curragh as the biological father and a retrial was ordered. At the retrial Curragh forced Emma to retell her account of the extreme abuse she'd suffered. Reflecting on Curragh's original eight-year sentence, Emma stated:

To only get the same length of time that he put me through, I mean, I've lost my childhood. Thinking my mummy hated me, thinking I was a 'dirty wee bitch' - because that's what I was called. I scarred myself because I used to wash myself in bleach after what he did to me (Devlin 2014).

Cathy's son, like so many of the progeny of the abusers described in the international press reporting, had a rare genetic disorder. He died during the course of Curragh's 2011 trial, at the age of six. Cathy reflected, 'I remember the day when the judge said in court that the boy had passed away, he (Curragh) didn't even flinch' (Devlin 2014).

#### *Clinical reports of prolonged incest*

When a clinical grouping of ten women (age range 26 to 57) who had experienced such abuse were compared to cases of incestuous abuse identified in press reports, the characteristics were largely congruent (Middleton 2013a). At one stage or other, this author had contact with one or both parents in five of the ten cases. Typically these women reported being sexually abused from under three years of age. The manipulation of their sexual response by their abusers helped condition enduring sexualised attachments, while shame and fear were key components in maintaining compliance and silence. Most described the induction by their father of orgasm at around six years of age. These women had high indices of self-harm and suicidality and were prone in the earlier phases to place themselves in dangerous re-enactment scenarios.

The average duration of incestuous abuse for this group of women was 31 years (the same period that Elisabeth Fritzl was abused by her father) and the average estimate of episodes of sexual abuse in their lives was 3,320 (close to the experience of Elisabeth Fritzl). Most such highly dissociative women experienced being 'fused' to their father and did not feel, at least initially, that they had ownership of their own body. All fulfilled diagnostic criteria for dissociative identity disorder (DID). The youngest that any became pregnant was 12 years of age, with seven or eight experiencing one or more terminations of incest pregnancies. The likelihood that one or more of their children was incestuously fathered was an issue for at least six of the ten women.

Six of the women abused by their fathers had children of their own. Of these, four were aware or strongly suspected that their father had also sexually abused at least one of their children. No less than seven of the fathers forced their daughters into having some sort of sexual contact with



their own offspring or with a young relative, further extending pervasive feelings of shame and self-hate. Generally the mother was reported as being an active participant in their children's sexual abuse (70 per cent) or at least having done little to protect them and, indeed, when some other person made a notification, the mothers ultimately supported their husband/ex-husband. No mother who was one of these ten abused women ever reported abuse to child protection authorities, yet all had at least some contact with police regarding their children's abuse and two had taken out aggravated violence orders against abusive family members. None followed through with police contact sufficiently to have the father formally charged, though in some instances this remains a future possibility.

The fathers, despite a propensity to use or threaten violence to their daughters, generally appeared to be – or had been – productively employed, financially comfortable and stably married (only one was ever divorced), and half had had close involvement with a church. Yet nine of the women were aware that their father had himself had a dysfunctional upbringing and three had witnessed a grandfather having sex with their father. Only two of the ten women felt that their boundary-less fathers did not have a condition akin to DID. More than half the fathers had a history of heavy alcohol consumption. Suicide and/or murder had occurred within the first or second-degree relatives of these women at high frequency levels.

All ten women had been sexually abused by various groupings of individuals connected to their fathers (either work or church-related) and, for at least eight of them, this included some variant of child prostitution. Seven were subjected to some variant of multigenerational/extended family sexual abuse. For example, one woman was sexually abused by both grandfathers (one of whom, when discovered sexually abusing another child, shot himself with the same handgun used to terrify his child victims). She was also sexually abused by her father, her mother and both brothers, and was forced to have sexual involvement with her sister. Once married, one brother teamed up with her husband and others to continue the abuse. Ultimately, in her late forties she took out an aggravated violence order against this brother. She was also sexually abused by her female general practitioner, with the matter reported to the relevant health authorities. For the seven who married, sexual abuse by their fathers was ongoing and, even when the father died, his abusive role was largely inherited by someone within the family or extended abuse grouping.

Extreme violence characterised the abuse histories of these ten women and seven had experienced abuse-related injuries of sufficient magnitude to warrant surgery or carried internal genital injuries. Nearly all (nine) received death threats from their father or threats that they would go to hell, and seven had experienced their father and/or grandfather encouraging them to suicide. Guns figured prominently in the abuse, with eight of the women experiencing firearms intimidation by abusers, the threat of being shot or guns incorporated into sex acts. Several experienced guns being inserted vaginally. Concerted attempts by their father to kill them were reported by three of them. The great majority described being tied up or otherwise constrained during episodes of abuse, being locked in rooms or kennels, and/or being witness to their father's cruelty to animals. The use of dogs in the sexual abuse was reported by nine women, an issue tentatively raised by Jaycee Dugard in her account of her imprisonment and 18 years of abuse at the hands of previously jailed violent rapist, Philip Garrido and his wife Nancy (Dugard 2011). With all ten women, their father and/or brother were involved with taking pornographic pictures of their being abused.

## **Discussion**

The father who is psychologically capable of placing his children in the role of long-term sexual slaves seemingly has, in his disposition and *modus operandi*, a lot in common with those other entitled individuals in society who serially, and frequently sadistically, exploit and abuse those who are relatively powerless. There is strong motivation for sexual abusers who operate outside

the law to form links with others engaged in similar abuse and we have visited a number of representative examples, including those who have avoided prosecution for decades, those who have used power and money to secure plea bargains attached to minimalistic punishments, and those that have exerted enough political influence that any accounting in the future is still unlikely. While some who involve themselves in organised abuse use or create institutions to build a positive persona that enhances credibility, provides access to victims, and contribute to the covering up their crimes, others rely less on such public institutions.

While we are now seeing serious inquiries into the role societal institutions play in the sexual abuse of children, we are a long way from having similar sorts of inquiries into what can be the most silent, pervasive and hierarchical of all institutions: the family. For the long-term incestuous abuser, whatever his own past abuse and conditioning, it makes sense, if he is to keep his activities from being reported, that he involves other family members in the abuse, a pattern that he may well have inherited from his own father and others, and it makes sense that he has a compliant marital partner. From this vantage point it also seems logical that, apart from the kudos he receives from like-minded abusers, forcing his daughter to provide sexual favours to men who have standing in the local community imparts a strong message about his power. As one individual abused in this manner asked, how could she report the abuse to authorities when the abuse network that her father subjected her to included two local policemen? Her father recently died. One of the documents she recovered was a photo of him posing happily arm-in-arm with fellow abusers at the site where they had all sadistically abused her. Sexual abuse involving multiple perpetrators is typically more sadistic than that associated with a solo perpetrator (Salter 2013). Conceptually, it is generally appropriate to view ongoing incestuous abuse during adulthood as a variant of organised abuse, a variant that is particularly longstanding and sadistic.

The extent of psychological, physical and sexual abuse suffered by the women described in the international press reports and recounted by the ten women described above (who are but a representative sample of a much larger number that have been seen by the author in clinical practice) is extreme. Also evident is the sheer lethality of many of the environments in which this sort of abuse occurs; situations characterised by death threats and the infliction of grievous injuries, abusers producing guns or other weapons, attempted or completed killings, and commands by abusers to suicide. Clinically one encounters scenarios in this abuse spectrum where, when there is uncomfortable attention in his direction, the abuser deals with it by doing his best to have his victim suicide, an outcome that is likely to be accepted by others as unsuspecting, in the context of many years of documented self-harm and suicidal ideation. One of the ten women survived an almost fatal overdose necessitating resuscitating in ICU following such an exhortation from her father; another, who had previously been flung off a high balcony by her father, fled when ordered to hang herself. In this regard there is an obvious parallel with high level child sex abuse groupings mentioned already, where investigators came under serious threat or key witnesses/investigators mysteriously died, 'suicided' or suddenly fled the country.

As with those organising the serial sexual abuse of children in Islington, the incestuous father in this spectrum sexually abuses many victims and uses multiple ways to foster shame while capitalising on the associated drug/alcohol use, self-harm, and an image of promiscuity, such that the victim, if they did try to take action, is already discredited. The community accommodation of the abuser allows symptoms of life-destroying organised abuse to be dismissed as the 'lifestyle choices' of teenagers with 'chaotic lifestyles'. One adult victim of ongoing incestuous abuse reported in recent times had sourced copies of child protection records pertaining to her highly abusive childhood. Child safety officers stopped visiting the house on the rationale that, since so little notice was being taken of their advice, their time was more usefully directed to families that better appreciated their efforts.

The scope and longevity of activities perpetrated for decades by prominent well-connected extreme sexual abusers such as Jimmy Savile and Jerry Sandusky and the manner in which investigations into politically connected and/or enduring groupings of influential abusers have been shut-down or, alternatively, not progressed all speak of our accommodation of the abuser and our difficulty in affording credibility to those who are effectively anonymous victims, as well as the at times audacious actions on the part of powerful abusers potentially facing jail. Examples include the earlier attempted investigation into the Elm Guest House in London (Hines 2014), the 'Franklin Scandal' (Bryant 2009), the disquieting matter of the Dutroux affair in Belgium (Evans-Pritchard 2004), the decades spent launching a credible investigation into the Casa Pia state-run children's home in Portugal (BBC 2010) or into the North Wales care homes (Tozer 2013), the lack of will to prosecute anyone in relation to the Dozier Reform School horrors in Florida (Chappel 2014), the decades of abuse by Catholic clergymen at St Stanislaus College in Bathurst, Australia (Rubinsztein-Dunlop 2014), or the Haut de la Garenne children's home on the island of Jersey (Fairweather 2012). Additional congruent examples include the extraordinary initial mass acquittal in the Tucumán trial (Valente 2012), along with the sort of mind-set articulated by a younger Margaret Hodge who led the Islington Council at the time and who labelled credible press reports of organised child sexual abuse in all 12 Council-run homes as 'sensationalist ... gutter journalism' (Fairweather 2014). This is not to mention Pope John Paul II's 'untouchable' charismatic friend Marcial Maciel and his decades-long double life as effective polygamist, sexual abuser of children (including his own), briber, embezzler and opiate addict (Berry 2010). We seem to struggle with recognising how centrally placed deception is in human affairs but at the same time can nominate corruption as the single biggest issue facing many countries. Yet deception and the adoption of a 'double life' is as central to the abuse activities of the politically connected pedophile ring as it is to fathers in the Josef Fritzl spectrum of incestuous abuse.

Part of society's accommodation of the abuser has been the fact that ongoing incest during adulthood – a relatively common form of extreme abuse that is associated with enormous psychological and physical morbidity as well as high rates of suicide and murder – has avoided being the subject of systematic scientific reporting until recently. At the same time many constructed a view that this form of abuse was rare and little was known about it. Yet this is a phenomenon that merges with, or develops into variations of, organised abuse, including that centred on the family or on prostitution or that involving abuse networks, whether incorporating the father's workmates, fellow church members or other groupings. Such abusers have a keen interest in pornography and in photographing the abuse of their victims and in this regard have fixations congruent with the file-sharing behaviours of Internet pedophile groupings. Jimmy Savile or Phillip Garrido did not have children of their own to abuse so they stole other children, but the remorseless longevity of their practices, the involvement of others, and the sorts of acts they perpetrated would not be atypical of the incestuous fathers described herein.

Yet recognition of the form of extreme abuse represented by ongoing incest during adulthood, carrying with it close connections to sadism, sexual slavery, and organised abuse – that is, the challenge of extreme abuse that does not end – represents something of a final frontier for the trauma field. After 150 years of press reporting of such abuse, something resembling a tipping point has been reached. The wide-ranging \$502 million Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the British Parliament's recently announced formal investigation of pedophilia within its own ranks, the fine-grained documentation of a half-century of abuse by an individual as prominent as Jimmy Savile, and the still-unfolding exposure of many thousands of child-abusing Catholic clerics across the globe, are examples of a collective attitude that had never before reached a critical mass. As we begin to find the will to investigate past organised abuse on scales not previously contemplated (Middleton et al. 2014a, 2014b), we are also able to articulate and delineate the reality of ongoing incest during

adulthood, a shared awareness congruent with an advancing willingness in many societies to confront the overlapping reach of multiple forms of organised sexual abuse, including that centred long-term on the family home.

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<sup>1</sup> By way of example, the recent prosecution of the billionaire financier and education philanthropist Jeffrey Epstein, a man who had been on close friendly terms with Bill Clinton, Eliot Spitzer, Prince Andrew and Ehud Barak, was inordinately unusual. The plea bargaining represented extraordinarily generous 'special treatment' given the extent of evidence and the number of child victims (approximately 40), while the sentence that he served, 13 months of overnight detention in a county jail for offences that could have earned twenty years in state prison, raised many questions (see Sarnoff 2010; Gysin 2015).

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