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REDACTED

A.

Q.

Now Mortlake, have you heard anything from Mortlake?

A. Only that the Parish Priest who followed Father Henry Nolan, Dennis Denehy, the Irishman from Charlton, said the first night he was there, there was a knock on the door and there were about four fellows who said "You are the new Priest?" He thought it was great to have a welcoming party. He was the first one directly after Ridsdale, I think. He was more or less stood up against the wall by these fellows and told if he interfered with any of the kids he would be gutted.

Q. This was a deputation?

A. They were parents, and they said to him "If you are anything like that other prick we will cut your guts out, etc." He said he knew nothing about it until that night. He talked with these

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people and it came out that nearly every boy in the school. Ridsdale had attempted to do something with.

Q. How many boys would there have been at the Mortlake school?

A. Probably 50 children, so say 25 boys.

He had probably a lot more initiative than I. Because he actually went to a non Catholic counselling couple in Ballarat, this is Denehy, invited them to Mortlake and told the people that it was nothing to do with the Church, but he felt sorry for anyone that had been hurt and he provided that facility and invited these people down. He said that some people even took the opportunity of going with their boys or as parents to sort of talk over why this could happen and how it affects your future, etc.

So when I said to the Bishop here, "Well what do I do if people come" and he said "Well tell them we have the Catholic Family Welfare Office. I said to him "They may say you are only trying to send up your boys to smooth over something".

But what Denehy did I fully commend. It was a Uniting Church thing, so they weren't going to come in and say they were on the side of the Priest and try and just calm the people down.

Q. Well he was thrown into an appalling situation?

A. Well I suppose the Bishop didn't actually tell me that it had happened here. It was only through the Priest's gossip lines that you learn.

Q. REDACTED

A.

Q.

Father Gerald Ridsdale goes to Court on 26th May and I think

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he is going to plead guilty and you can imagine, it will be a feast for the media. That sort of publicity sort of brings people out.

- A. That is one of the reasons why I publicly said off the altar here that I know it has happened, you all know it has happened and if you want to say something, come to me. Somebody said, a Priest friend of mine "Why did you take it on your shoulders?" I said "I think I have the pastoral care of these people, it would be easy to flick it on to the Bishop, but if they cannot talk about it openly here, you don't know where it goes to". But there was not an avalanche of people, only a few people said to me that they spoke to their sons and it came out that little things had happened, but there didn't seem to be a stampede of people saying they had been maltreated.

Q. REDACTED

A.

Q. Do you know anything of what his modus operandi was for Whitecliffs?

- A. Only that he went there and while he was at Mortlake I can remember calling to see him and he had a jar of opals and he was saying to me "Now if I glaze those up they would be worth \$2000". So it was lucrative and I also I know that he did take people, or lads, with him, but as to who I don't know and I have never seen the Whitecliffs set up.