

social work practice in various cases. Those have either come down on Social Services Departments for not acting quickly enough or not acting effectively enough, or for 'going over the top' in cases such as Cleveland, Rochdale and the Orkneys. And so I think social work as a whole has become very defensive and local authorities' social work more defensive than most.

CG: Where does this case fit with the Orkneys case in terms of the time scale? Was this occurring after that case had come to media attention or before?

SSM: The original removal of the children was prior to the Orkneys case. I don't think if it had been after that case, there would have been any agreement on dawn raids, for example. The removal of the fourth child, I think, took place after Orkneys, but there is no question of police involvement or raids or anything. It was simply a Place of Safety Order and wardship.

CG: Is there anything else you want to say about the case itself?

SSM: I think it's worth noting the judgement in the Wardship case, because that heard a lot of evidence from different people, some who had been involved from the start, and

some who had subsequently become involved, and from an expert witness. The judge said:

I am satisfied that the children have been sexually abused in a most evil way. The probability is that they have been forced to participate in sexual orgies of a sadistic nature. They may be damaged irreparably. The mother has failed to provide protection, there is evidence that she was a willing participant.

So the judge was satisfied beyond any doubt that the children had been sexually abused. Another point he made was that the two oldest children are still exhibiting sexualised behaviour that you wouldn't expect of children who are now eight and six years old.

CG: So that behaviour was being exhibited 3 years after their removal from home?

SSM: Yes



This interview will be concluded in the next issue of *Children Australia*.

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