

Apocryphilia

Simon Matthews

Danczuk

The first book to appear out of the current maelstrom of historic VIP abuse allegations, *Smile for the Camera*, was highly praised when published in 2014.¹ Co-written by Simon Danczuk, Labour MP for Rochdale, and Matthew Baker (who, one suspects, did much of the actual writing), its jacket claims that:

'it's about those who knew that abuse was taking place but looked the other way *making the corridors of Westminster a safe haven for paedophiles like Cyril Smith*'. (My emphasis).

Do Danczuk and Baker get close to proving this?

The authors provide Smith's background – though not in detail. He was Chairman of the Rochdale Liberal Party in 1949, joined Labour and got elected as a local councillor in 1952. Thereafter he became a fairly typical example of the northern 'boss politician'. It appears that he began assaulting adolescent boys in his thirties and, eventually, a police investigation ensued. This concluded in 1969 with a decision to send a file to the Director of Public Prosecutions who decided the case wasn't strong enough to take to court. Much speculation follows about why this was considered to be so. At about the same time Smith quit the Labour Party, returned to the Liberals and won the Rochdale bye-election in October 1972. He sat as MP for the area for 20 years, retiring, undefeated in 1992. A bit more could have been sketched in

¹ *Smile for the Camera* – *The double life of Cyril Smith* (Biteback Publishing, 2014). 'The best political book I've read all year' – Michael Crick.

about the political circumstances locally: Rochdale has been a marginal seat for most of the last 70-odd years and this was so throughout Smith's tenure. The seat went Labour, narrowly, in 1997 and Liberal Democrat, again narrowly, in 2005. In 2010 Danczuk took it for Labour with a majority of only 889. In this context, some might feel it a bit odd that a sitting MP should produce a book trashing the reputation of one of his immediate predecessors. Is this a new genre? The getting even memoir? Perhaps a more measured and independent view of Smith and his alleged misdemeanours should have been taken.

Having reached the point where Smith becomes a household name, Danczuk and Baker try very hard to assemble a compelling narrative – and fail. Jimmy Savile appears on p. 101 (Smith was a guest on his show). There are several pages of an ultimately inconclusive account about alleged abuse and cover ups at Knowl View Children's Home and MI5 get name checked on p. 195 as having kept Smith out of trouble ('but no one is prepared to go on record about it'). Danczuk mentions a dispute he has with the police about how Smith's offences should be described. They remind him that he cannot, in 2012, accuse Smith of rape (for allegedly forcing a teenage boy to have oral sex with him) because when the offence took place, nearly 50 years earlier, it was classed as indecent assault. Danczuk clearly doesn't like this, but the police are correct: you can't retrospectively change the law.

Other matters raised in the text include Smith being arrested driving along a motorway with a car full of obscene publications in 1980 before the final part of the book takes us to the Elm Lodge Guest House, and the time (twenty plus years ago) when the Paedophile Liberation Front and the Paedophile Information Exchange were affiliated to the NCCL.²

The problem is that much of this turned out either to be

² The past (and relatively brief) association of the NCCL with the PLF and PIE was used recently to attack Harriet Harman MP who worked as a legal officer at the NCCL during part of the period in question. Ironically (in this context) Harman is the niece of Lord Longford, an anti-pornography campaigner and noted opponent of equal rights for homosexuals.

unverifiable, simply untrue, or Smith's actual involvement with it can't be established. Why would Smith – as an MP entitled to free first class rail travel – be driving around the UK with a vehicle full of pornography? On 30 July 2015 *The Evening Standard* reported that despite a lengthy enquiry – involving two former chief constables and sixty police staff – no evidence could be found that Smith had ever been arrested with a car boot full of sex magazines. After Danczuk first outed Smith (in 2012), *BBC Newsnight* ran a lengthy piece on the case. Careful scrutiny indicated that those making claims against Smith seemed to be alleging physical mistreatment (being knocked around, hit with a slipper etc.) not necessarily sexual abuse. The programme also claimed that Smith had attended gay orgies at a block of flats in the Vauxhall area at some point in the past. The problem was that the block was one of several knocked down circa 1980 (at which point it was derelict). Why would Smith have gone to a block of empty tenements in poor repair to take part in an orgy in the '70s? How did he get there? By taxi? Or did he drive himself? It wasn't convincing. A reasonable conclusion would be that Cyril Smith found an outlet for his sexual urges (possibly caused by his morbid obesity making it impossible for him to have relationships with women) by molesting and abusing teenage boys. His homely man-of-the-people act had a darker, bullying side. But was he part of a broader, overarching paedophile conspiracy? The evidence for that is not clear at all.

Casting himself as a vigilante exposing perverts in high places, and with his wife building up an on-line profile of some significance by posting images of her body on Twitter and Facebook (rather like one of the Kardashians), Danczuk was re-elected MP for Rochdale in May 2015 with a majority of 12,442 – the biggest since the constituency was created. He now has a new partner, the exhibitionist wife having been discarded, and has emerged as an opponent of Jeremy Corbyn and a flag-waver for the (self-proclaimed) Labour moderates.

There's a good book about this waiting to be written.³

Watson

Allegations about Smith had been circulating at a low level for years before Danczuk made his official denunciation in September 2012. On 24 October 2012 Tom Watson MP used parliamentary privilege to announce the existence of 'a powerful paedophile network linked to Parliament and no. 10' and to call for vigorous action in pursuit of this. The jury is still out on many of the more lurid claims – or more precisely, given the length of time that has elapsed since the alleged offences were committed, the jury may never be coming back – but the public since have been given no shortage of spectacular stories to consider. In no particular order these have included Ken Clark MP assaulting young men, Harvey Proctor being prevented from killing children by Edward Heath and assertions that a VIP sex ring organised orgies at Dolphin Square SW1, a block of thirties flats where many MPs and similar establishment type folk live. At one point the police appealed for 'victims' of Edward Heath to come forward.

It now appears that Watson has corresponded with Chris Fay, formerly a Labour councillor in Greenwich (1986-1990) who was eventually expelled from the Labour Party and later jailed for being party to a fraud perpetrated against old age pensioners.⁴ It also appears to be the case that both

³ The press reported that the brother of Danczuk's ex-partner – who works as a security guard in the Manchester area – was being charged with historical sex offences dating back twenty-five years. See *The Daily Mirror* and *The Independent* 28 October 2015. The parallels with the type of material found in the celebrity magazines at the till in supermarkets are irresistible.

⁴ See *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* 10 and 11 October 2015. Fay is supposed to have briefed Watson about the late Leon Brittan. Fay's correspondence in the '80s about sex abuse can be read on line at <<http://annaraccoon.com/2014/01/31/what-happens-if-three-butterflies-flap-their-wings-simultaneously/>>. It appears that Fay and a fellow abuse campaigner (Mary Moss) compiled lists of famous persons who supposedly visited the Elm Lodge Guest House. It is not clear, though, whether they ever visited the establishment themselves or from whom they acquired this information. A wide range of websites and blogs attesting to this can be read by googling Mary Moss + Chris Fay + Elm Lodge Guest House.

people making the particular denunciations re: Dolphin Square have done so after receiving discredited 'recovered memory' therapies.⁵ In a further twist it emerged in the press on 22 October 2015 that the theory of an overarching paedophile conspiracy in high places could be traced back to a dossier of material prepared in the '70s by Victor Raikes and Anthony Courtney (both of whom are now dead).⁶ Courtney and Raikes supposedly gave this to Geoffrey Dickens MP (also dead) who raised the matter with Leon Brittan (died January 2015), then Home Secretary. After some confusion about the material being lost (and much speculation about whether this was deliberate) it has now been found: an anonymous intermediary who says he gave it to Dickens in 1981 has now given a copy to John Mann MP. What will it contain? Who is the anonymous intermediary? Do we know that it is the same material given to Dickens? Do we even know if Raikes and Courtney compiled it? In normal circumstances none of this would be admissible as evidence in Court.

On 13 September 2015 *The Sunday Times* reported that the police were dropping enquiries into the VIP sex ring at Dolphin Square because there was 'no evidence to support the allegations'. Watson now finds himself in some difficulty, primarily because he named the late Leon Brittan as a rapist and as someone who had thwarted adequate investigations
5 *The Sunday Times* 18 October 2015. See <<http://bfms.org.uk/the-sunday-times-vip-sex-cases-link-to-false-memory/>>

6 Victor Raikes was a Conservative MP 1931-1957 and later Chairman of the Monday Club 1976-1978. He resigned from Parliament in 1957 in anger at the UK 'climbing down' and abandoning military action against Egypt in 1956. Courtney was a career naval officer who ran the UK's infiltration of agents into Latvia and Estonia in the late '40s, an operation that Kim Philby destroyed by revealing it to the Soviets. Courtney was a Conservative MP 1959-1966. Both Courtney and Raikes would have been in their seventies when compiling any dossier of misdeeds in high places for use by Geoffrey Dickens. If they did so, why did they pass this to Dickens in 1981? It is worth remembering that at this point Thatcher's days as PM were widely regarded as numbered – if she had been defeated and replaced as Leader this would have represented a major reversal for everything the Conservative right had worked for over a 25 year period. Was the Dickens dossier intended to compromise the Labour, SDP, Liberal opposition and strengthen the notion that the UK needed a 'firm' leader?

into paedophilia in high places in the past. Watson should have read the late Richard Webster's *The Secret of Bryn Estyn*, the gold standard for anyone venturing into such murky waters.⁷ Alternatively, he could have asked any number of people for advice. Perhaps this lack of experience and common sense is because his career.....a progression from Hull University Labour Club to President of the Students Union (1992), to a bag-carrying role at Labour HQ, to political officer for a trade union, to MP for West Bromwich East (2001).....has involved never having a proper job. Given that he appears to welcome unlimited press coverage of sex abuse matters involving public figures, it is ironic that in 2011 he achieved considerable media exposure by campaigning for regulation of the UK press, and, specifically calling for action to be taken against Rupert Murdoch and News International in the aftermath of the phone-hacking scandal. He was supported in this by Max Mosley (whose outrage stemmed from being filmed taking part in an orgy).⁸ Mosley subsequently made a donation to Watson's successful campaign for the Labour Party Deputy Leadership in 2015.⁹

Watson will probably survive. But he looks stupid.

Dickens' dossier

Like Watson and Danczuk today, Geoffrey Dickens also believed in wide-ranging cover-ups of sexual misconduct in high places. Presumably John Mann MP will hand his recently found copy of the dossier to the Goddard Enquiry to assist it with its deliberations. The report that the material was compiled by Victor Raikes and Anthony Courtney will raise eyebrows in some quarters. Both were prominent figures in the '40s and '50s, fiercely anti-communist and major figures in the Monday Club. Like many on the right they were

⁷ See *Lobster* 52.

⁸ See <<http://www.lobster-magazine.co.uk/free/lobster66/lob66-apocryphyia.pdf>> for Mosley and his recent connections with the Labour Party. Footage of the Mosley orgy was formerly viewable on You Tube but has now been taken down

⁹ See *The Daily Mail* 2 October 2015. It is said that Mosley paid £40,000 toward Watson's campaign.

determined to fight and reverse the decline of the UK, a decline that they ascribed to inadequate or even treacherous political leadership. Put at its simplest, they wanted to remove figures they saw as causing the decline (such as Harold Wilson, deemed to be a secret communist, and Edward Heath, deemed to be a closet socialist and also supposedly homosexual) and replace them with a much more satisfactory individual: Margaret Thatcher.

If Raikes and Courtney originated the material, and assuming they believed in it at face value, then they were essentially conspiracy theorists: searching for (and finding) a single overarching explanation of their difficulties. Danczuk's and Watson's interventions follow the same trajectory though in this case from a different political direction.....the location of a magic formula that would 'get' the Tories and reverse Labour's decline. In this context note that Brittan was Home Secretary during the miners strike and Thatcher gave Savile a knighthood.¹⁰

Along the way much mention has been made by Watson, Danczuk and others, of Elm Lodge Guest House. What do we know? It was a gay boarding house in suburban London that functioned for some years when the age of consent for homosexual acts between men was 21. It advertised its services discreetly, in the small ads section of *Gay News*, in what was then the fashion of the time. It was raided by the Police in 1982 and – officially – 12 boys gave evidence that they had been assaulted by men at the address. The owner was convicted of running a disorderly establishment and Elm Lodge closed shortly afterwards. No further charges were brought. Exactly what happened at Elm Lodge is not clear.....but the Internet is full of it and a wide range of public

¹⁰ The role of Brittan in the 1984-1985 miners strike was raised by Jim Hood, Labour MP for Lanark and Hamilton East, when accusing Brittan of molesting children. When challenged, Hood replied 'I am just repeating what I read in the papers'. Hood was heavily defeated by the SNP in 2015.

figures have been named as having visited the address.¹¹

Curiously none of those sleuthing misdeeds at Elm Lodge have thought to compare it with the establishment – a brothel, offering various specialist services – run by the late Cynthia Payne in Ambleside Avenue, SW16. This was raided by the police in 1978 and Payne was convicted, in 1980, of ‘keeping a disorderly house’. Her clients included members of the House of Lords and Commons, against whom no action was taken, because, presumably, it was not clear what offences they were committing. A later attempt to convict Payne of running prostitutes in 1987 ended in her acquittal by the jury with Geoffrey Dickens MP stating (in marked contrast to his opinions about other alleged sexual misconduct issues) ‘It seems astounding that all this public money should be poured into bringing these charges.’ Payne became a minor national treasure and celebrity with two UK feature films being made about her life. Given that the Payne trial and conviction – on very limited charges – occurred before the Elm Lodge case it seems possible that its outcome (and favourable publicity for Ms Payne) may have influenced the CPS in how it approached the Elm Lodge proceedings.

A central part of everything alleged by Raikes, Courtney, Dickens, Watson, Danczuk *et al* is that evidence existed that would have enabled prosecutions of many famous people to take place, but, for various reasons (they would allege a cover-up) this was never actioned. Is this true? It is worth considering that throughout the ‘60s, ‘70s and ‘80s the judicial authorities tried repeatedly to ‘hold a line’ against what was considered a rising tide of permissiveness and sexual

¹¹ Contact add services for gay men was a feature of several counter-culture publications in the ‘60s and ‘70s. *The International Times* was shut down in 1972 after being convicted of providing such a facility. It is hard to judge now why the police took relatively little action against those involved with Elm Lodge Guest House in 1982. It may have been that the ‘boys’ referred to were under 21, but over 16, and that the activities – though legally classifiable as assault – had been consensual. (And did those over 21 know the age of those under 21?) Alternatively it could also have been that trying to assemble a coherent prosecution case out of such circumstances, where there were a great many participants, some of whom would give contradictory accounts, was judged to be impractical.

libertarianism. From the Lady Chatterley trial, through to the Oz trial and the Romans in Britain case, juries either failed to convict or the prosecutors found public opinion firmly on the side of those in the dock, even if convictions were duly obtained. In terms of bringing sensational cases against public figures, some of whom could adeptly play the 'victim' in Court, the acquittal of Jeremy Thorpe (1979) would scarcely have helped matters.¹² A view might have emerged, then, in certain quarters, that any action against VIPs, particularly where sexual matters were concerned, should only have been embarked on where the evidence was substantial, reliable and indicated, incontrovertibly, undeniably perverse and criminal behaviour that a majority of the public would recoil from. Anything short of this, any suggestion that the matter might backfire when brought into the public domain, might have led to the issue being left 'on file' and nothing further done.

The Goddard Enquiry may well consider all of this. It is not clear how long it will deliberate or when it will report but with so many of the players in this drama now dead it is hard to see what can be proven and harder still to see how evidence against them might be tested.

Hipsters don't have real jobs either

In his latest book, *Deep South*, Paul Theroux travels into the hinterland of the US, far away from the moderately Europeanized east and west coast cities. He observes that everything now appears to have been hollowed out: huge swathes of agricultural employment have disappeared due to mechanisation, including the remaining small scale cotton enterprises, manufacturing has been outsourced to China, and even cat fish farms have now largely disappeared, apparently undercut by competition from Vietnam. One reviewer found this a bit gloomy – reminding potential readers that there was still much to enjoy in the rural US, such as vinyl record stores

¹² Thorpe was cleared of conspiracy to murder a former homosexual lover. No charges for this offence were ever brought against any third party.

and welcome revival of Southern food.¹³ Yes: but does this adequately counterbalance the loss of millions of secure jobs? Of course not; and the idea that it could even be raised illustrates a level of economic illiteracy now commonplace.

The debate about the death of the old economy with its reliance on hard physical manual work and the birth of the new economy and its alleged benefits is well known. Assessing the winners and losers from these changes usually produces a quick realisation that ordinary working people are the losers. In the UK, for example, a high proportion of the white working class can now be found working in nail bars or call centres or as security guards and white van drivers, and have been demonised for doing so.¹⁴ But are the middle classes also benefiting from our post industrial society in which everyone is expected to have a portfolio career? Do pop up cupcake parlours, artisanal breweries, app creators, web site designers and retro boutiques represent a balanced future?

In his mildly political book Theroux is one of many who recognize that this is probably not the case.

A funny thing happened on the way to the cold war

Books about John Freeman and Jona von Ustinov (aka 'Klop', father of Peter Ustinov)¹⁵ appeared recently, both making useful contributions to our knowledge of our recent political past.¹⁶

Klop had an interesting life – a genuinely cosmopolitan upbringing followed by service in the German military 1914-1918 and diplomatic work for the Weimar republic in the Soviet Union and the UK. He quit this in 1935 rather than complete a

¹³ *Deep South – Four Seasons on Back Roads* (Hamish Hamilton, 2015), reviewed in *The Times* by David Taylor.

¹⁴ See Owen Jones, *Chavs – The demonization of the working class* (Verso, 2011)

¹⁵ Originally Ustinow. Jona retained that spelling. Peter changed it to Ustinov. For simplicity I have used Ustinov here for both.

¹⁶ Peter Day, *Klop – Britain's most ingenious secret agent* (Biteback, 2014) and Hugh Purcell, *A very private celebrity – The nine lives of John Freeman* (Robson Press, 2015)

questionnaire enquiring about his racial background and was promptly recruited by MI5.¹⁷ The book gives us further information – in some detail – about how hard many Germans tried to make Chamberlain stand firm over Czechoslovakia in 1938. Klop hosted a number of confidential meetings between German military and diplomatic figures and British FO advisors. However, the British preference for not removing Hitler via a military coup and keeping him as a reliable anti-Communist instead drove them all to despair, with one, Wolfgang zu Putlitz, memorably commenting ‘.....the English think they are wise and strong. They are mistaken. They are stupid and weak.’¹⁸ Given the diminishment in the UK’s fortunes caused by what happened after 1939 this seems a not unreasonable conclusion.

After the war Klop switched to MI6, dealing frequently with Kim Philby. He worked through to his retirement in 1957 but the account of his life seems to indicate that he did little of note post 1951, and struggled even to get a pension when he retired. Why? Well: ultimately von Ustinov was an urbane, highly cultured pragmatist who would have wanted to do a deal with the USSR over Germany. Once the US seized control of the diplomatic initiative in Europe in 1948-1949, proclaiming the existence of a Cold War, and especially after the decamping of Burgess and McLean in 1951, expansive liberal types like Klop were not in vogue. A strong case can be made for him being the most competent intelligence officer the British had working for them 1935-1950.

At first glance it might appear that John Freeman, like Ustinov, was a casualty of the Cold War. He too was cultured, urbane and intelligent. Elected MP for Watford in 1945, he was quickly fancied as a future Labour leader. Instead he quit Parliament in 1955 having risen no higher than Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Supply (1947-1951). He then pursued careers in broadcasting and diplomacy. His

¹⁷ In MI5 Klop worked closely with Henry Kerby, later Conservative MP for Arundel and Shoreham 1954-1971. Like Anthony Courtney, Kerby retained close connections with the intelligence world while an MP.

¹⁸ Putlitz’s career took him into exile in the US in 1939. He later worked for MI6 and eventually returned to live in East Germany in 1952.

disappearance from politics when clearly an above average performer always seemed strange. The picture of him that emerges, though, is that of a highly competent, confident, organised but self-centred individual. For instance, Freeman told several people in April 1951, when resigning with Bevan and Wilson over the introduction of NHS charges, that he regarded Wilson as a mere opportunist. But this description could surely be applied to him: he changed his career (and his wife) every decade. He was also at pains to deflect enquiries about himself whilst acting as an inquisitor on *Panorama* (1958-1960) or *Face to Face* (1959-1962) and firmly questioning public figures.

The latter part of the book covers the infighting at London Weekend TV involving Freeman and Aiden Crawley (like him public school, Oxbridge and a former MP) David Frost and Rupert Murdoch. The descriptions of the board room battles and manoeuvres illustrate rather well the type of people who get to the top of the media industry in the UK: a closed little world of self-selecting, self-important types who are constantly being appointed to lucrative positions without being properly interviewed (and often with no precise qualifications for the job) and who talk a great deal of their significant role in public service.

Perhaps the common theme running through Freeman's life was that he always took care not to fall out with influential people. Despite an interesting career Freeman did not leave any particular legacy and must, in terms of the historical record, be considered a marginal figure. This study of him (the first; Freeman destroyed all his personal papers) is orthodox in its approach and could have more usefully considered his life through the prism of class, rather than concentrating on his progression through a series of events.

Pirate radio

In *Selling the Sixties* Robert Chapman records that Philip Birch, the managing director of Radio London, stayed with President Johnson for a weekend to get 'approval' for the project prior

to it going on the air in December 1964.¹⁹ This was nine weeks after Harold Wilson won the October 1964 general election. The launch of Radio London had, though, been planned prior to polling day. It is not clear why Birch and Radio London needed the approval of LBJ to carry out a private commercial activity outside UK territorial waters.

Birch was previously an accounts manager at J Walter Thompson, a leading advertising agency that some years later would be shown to have had links to the CIA.²⁰ Radio London itself, of course, had been set up with advice from US commercial radio magnate Gordon McLendon, someone the CIA had turned to when operating similar outfits in central America and the Caribbean in the '50s.

The combination of McLendon + LBJ + J Walter Thompson does seem to suggest that Radio London was more than just a radio station playing pop music.

¹⁹ Robert Chapman, *Selling the Sixties* (1992) now available on-line at <http://monoskop.org/images/6/65/Chapman_Robert_Selling_the_Sixties_The_Pirates_and_Pop_Music_Radio.pdf>.

²⁰ Reference is made to the close connections between J Walter Thompson and the CIA at <http://www.dsausa.org/women_and_pots_and_pans>. There are several other sources stating that the CIA worked via JWT in Chile in the '70s. JWT had previously been closely connected to MI6/MI5.