

CHAPTER 6 – MATERIAL IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

Introduction

- 6.1 A great deal was written and published about Savile over the years. Much of it was adulatory. There were frequent references to his good works and his friendships with establishment figures, including members of the Royal Family and prominent politicians, particularly Lady Thatcher. There were frequent references to his religious faith and to his claim to be a regular churchgoer. Some of this amounted almost to hagiography. There was, however, some published material which revealed a different, adverse, side of Savile, which showed that he claimed to have had connections with people who operated on the wrong side of the law and to have had corrupt relations with the police. There was also material which demonstrated that his sexual life was not only prolific but also deeply unattractive. Many people reading this collection of adverse material would have concluded that Savile was amoral.
- 6.2 In this chapter, I shall set out this adverse material. Its impact appears to have been slight. It is, however, important to remember that it formed only a small part of the whole range of material about Savile in the public domain and also that it did not emerge at one time but in pieces over the years. The importance of much of what follows is that it was written or approved by Savile himself.

Books and Publications Written or Approved by Savile Himself

As It Happens

- 6.3 In 1974, when Savile would have been 47, his autobiography entitled *As It Happens* was published. This was intended to be amusing. It is full of anecdotes which many people would have found very funny. It is less easy to laugh now that we know

more about the man. The book made no secret of Savile's interest in sex. He described his sexual experiences, not in the kind of graphic detail which one might read nowadays, but in detail which I find surprising for that time.⁷⁰ He made it clear that he had a powerful heterosexual drive and that he was not interested in forming long-term relationships. He said (or claimed, as the reader might think he was exaggerating) that he had had sexual intercourse or sexual contact with a very large number of young girls, some of them apparently young enough to be under the direct supervision of their parents. He did not give dates but it was clear that this kind of conduct was continuing at a time when he was a famous celebrity and was recognised wherever he went; so this was not conduct limited to his youth.

6.4 He implied that he liked group sex, referring to "team-handed times".⁷¹ He presented himself as the victim (albeit a willing victim) of shrewd and determined young girls, determined, that is, to have sex with him; in other words girls who were 'throwing themselves at him'. Sex, if it were to happen, would follow almost immediately upon meeting. He recounted a number of stories, obviously designed to amuse, where things went wrong; parents turned up at the wrong moment to collect their daughters or the young woman whom he was about to take home turned out to be with her husband. He claimed that he learned a lesson from these scrapes; he said "I never, ever, operate outside my own four walls". But, as he pointed out, he had a considerable number of "four walls" dotted about the country so "life is not too restricted".⁷²

6.5 He wrote about an invitation by Otley Council to attend their annual mayoral ball which had not been raising much money in

⁷⁰ *As It Happens*, see from p. 136.

⁷¹ *As It Happens*, see the last line of p. 136.

⁷² *As It Happens*, pp. 147 and 148.

recent years.⁷³ The Council obviously hoped that Savile's presence would attract a large crowd. He attended on condition that the Council would provide him with six girls and two tents in which they would spend the night after the ball was over. The Council apparently agreed to this and six girls were selected from the many who applied. According to Savile, when they arrived, the girls "looked good enough to eat". The father of one of the girls immediately "hauled her off home". Savile had brought with him "a millionaire pal". "When he saw the crumpet his eyes shot out a mile and his total conversation for the evening was an incredulous 'Are we kidding with them?' Technically no, as we were in the tent next door. Or were supposed to be." Savile then described what happened when the dance was over. The local dignitaries ferried the campers (five girls and two men) to the rural site and departed. He continued "It was all too much and we all fell about and over each other, making enough noise to wake the dead. Needless to say the girls' tent fell over and we all had to finish up together."

6.6 Savile made a rough statistical count of the number of girls he could attract per day.⁷⁴ This was based on his recognition that celebrity is, of itself, a sexual attraction. He calculated (on, he said, a conservative basis) that about 20% of any female audience would "fancy" him. He accepted that some would be too shy to get involved and that he himself might fancy only about 50% of those available. He concluded that, on a personal appearance, about 25 "super dolly birds" would be "putting the pressure on me" each night. And that, he pointed out, was only for personal appearances; multiply the numbers by the millions who watch television and "life gets interesting or complicated according to your state of health".

⁷³ *As It Happens*, pp. 121 and 122.

⁷⁴ *As It Happens*, pp. 143 and 144.

- 6.7 In an earlier section of the book, Savile described his experiences as the manager of a dance hall in Leeds.⁷⁵ He told the story of a “high-ranking lady police officer” (that does not have a ring of truth about it as in those days there were very few woman officers one could describe as high-ranking) who came to see him at the dance hall to show him the picture of a young girl who had absconded from a remand home; it was thought that she might come into the dance hall later that night. Savile promised that, if she did, he would turn her in the next day but would “keep her all night first as my reward”. He then asserted that it was “God’s truth” that she did indeed come into the dance hall, that he told her that she could run away if she wanted to but that, if she stayed, she could come home with him and that he would promise to see her when they “let her out”. She agreed to stay and, the following morning, he presented her at the police station. He wrote “The officeress was dissuaded from bringing charges against me by her colleagues, for it was well known that were I to go I would probably take half the station with me”.
- 6.8 Whether there is any truth in this tale, I have no idea. Its relevance lies in the fact that Savile appears to have been proud to claim that he spent the night with a young girl whom he had never met before, who was not only young but in a very vulnerable situation. Added to that, he seems to have been proud of the notion that he and the police in Leeds were in a corrupt relationship with each other.
- 6.9 At the time of publication of this book, Savile had been a regular presenter of *Top of the Pops* for 10 years, a programme where he was surrounded by teenage girls. He had also started presenting *Clunk Click*, which was soon to be replaced by *Jim’ll Fix It*, another programme which would entail contact

⁷⁵ *As It Happens*, p. 51.

with children and young people and which became a centrepiece of BBC Saturday early evening family entertainment. It seems to me that members of BBC staff reading this book should have wondered whether Savile was a suitable person to host programmes of that nature and whether it was appropriate for the BBC to present him, in effect, as a role model for young people. I have not spoken to any senior member of the BBC staff who was aware of the existence of this book. Roger Ordish, the producer of *Jim'll Fix It*, read the book soon after it came out and I will describe his reaction to it in Chapter 10.

6.10 It is surprising that so few BBC people read this book as it attracted some publicity at the time of publication. *The Guardian* reviewed it at some length on 16 October 1974, describing it as “very funny”. The review included a quotation about all the places Savile had had sex: “trains and boats and planes and bushes and fields, corridors, doorways, floors, chairs, slag heaps, desks and probably everything except the celebrated chandelier and ironing board.” *The Sunday People* featured it, with long quotations, including the passage I have mentioned above where Savile discusses the statistics of his opportunities to have sex. A large headline says “I can have my pick of 25 dollies any night”.

6.11 The book was republished in paperback two years later under a new title, *Love is an Uphill Thing*.⁷⁶ The book is essentially the same; the passages to which I have referred are still there. There is a new final chapter in which Savile explains why the title has been changed; he says that he had always wanted to call the book *Love is an Uphill Thing*, for reasons which he purports to explain but which I am quite unable to understand⁷⁷.

⁷⁶ J. Savile, *Love is an Uphill Thing*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1976.

⁷⁷ *Love is an Uphill Thing*, p. 176.

He adds a few anecdotes, one of which is sleazy⁷⁸ and another describes attending a party at Buckingham Palace⁷⁹. This republication was discussed in a BBC book review programme called *Read All About It* presented by Melvyn Bragg.

God'll fix it

- 6.12 Another book was published in 1979 called *God'll fix it*. It deals with Savile's religious beliefs. Savile was a Roman Catholic who claimed that religion was important to him. The book was published as Savile's but, in fact, it was 'ghosted' for him by Canon Colin Semper, a producer in the BBC's Religious Broadcasting department who had worked with Savile on *Speakeasy*. Canon Semper told me that Savile had recorded the material on tape but that he, Canon Semper, had written the book. I must assume that Savile approved the way in which his material has been presented. Although the style in which the book is written is 'jokey' (very much as Savile would have spoken), one is given the impression that Savile takes the underlying subject matter seriously. At page one, he said "I have a relationship with this God who is everything to me".
- 6.13 There is a chapter in which Savile imagines what will happen when he dies and meets Saint Peter at the Pearly Gates.⁸⁰ The gist of it is that he does not expect to be let into heaven without an argument. He expects that Saint Peter will accuse him of various sins, to which Savile's response will be that he has done a lot of good works and Saint Peter must put those on the credit side. He seems to be optimistic that this approach will eventually prevail and that he will have "pulled another stroke".⁸¹

⁷⁸ *Love is an Uphill Thing*, p. 180.

⁷⁹ *Love is an Uphill Thing*, pp. 183 – 184.

⁸⁰ *God'll fix it*, "What shall I say at the Pearly Gates and at the Judgement Table?", p. 41.

⁸¹ *God'll fix it*, p. 41.

6.14 Savile then imagines himself in the role of Saint Peter and says that he would be “very considerate and understanding in [his] judgements”. He would tend to say:

“You shouldn’t have lived like that, but you were driven by that machine of your body that caused you to do these things. I can understand that. But it’s not a very good way to live, is it?” And the majority of those whom I was judging would say, ‘Well, no, not really’. I wouldn’t put the boot in, go in too strong, because the person I am judging has been saddled with a body which does certain things and is part of fallen humanity. It could be that the person arriving at the judgement seat has been given a body prone to excesses because the glands dictated that he should be more than was really normal. The temptation could also be towards sexual excess in a girl – and I have known many – who has been born as a nymphomaniac. She can’t resist a man who runs his finger down her arm; that would ignite her more than something. She might not really want to be possessed by that man, but her body – and this is a medical fact – finds great difficulty in resisting. I would have a great sympathy for all these sorts of people, because they are more unlucky than bad. But I wouldn’t have much time for any human being who, knowingly, brought distress to another. I would find that very difficult to forgive because in this world, human beings should not cause unhappiness to others. I hate to see, for instance, a case of a boss who is particularly bitchy towards an underling and who will plot for his downfall from a purely evil point of view and will send the worker home to his wife and children saddened and unhappy. That boss is in a position of power and he has used that power to cause distress. I would say, ‘Look, you have cause *[sic]* unhappiness to that human being’. I would then dole out plenty of purgatory, as I do not like people causing other people to suffer.”⁸²

6.15 This material was in the public domain but does not appear to have aroused much, if any, general interest.

⁸² *God’ll fix it*, pp. 41-42.

Newspaper Articles

The Sunday People

- 6.16 Savile had a regular newspaper column in *The Sunday People* from about 1962. Most of this material is no longer available. The Savile investigation has located one article dated 16 January 1972. In it, Savile says that he had often thought he would write his life story but that there would be two problems: he would have to tell the truth and then he would “get nicked”. He says that his world is packed with “girls galore”.

The Sun Interviews in 1983

- 6.17 In 1983, Savile was interviewed by the journalist Dan Slater and this resulted in a series of articles in *The Sun* newspaper. The first article, dated 11 April 1983, was described as:

“Sun exclusive on the dark side of Britain’s top DJ”.

The main headline was:

“MY VIOLENT WORLD, BY JIM THE GODFATHER”.

A smaller headline said:

“How I fixed it the night I wanted someone beaten up.”

Beneath a photograph of Savile, the caption was:

“Some of the things I’ve done would get me 10 years inside”.

- 6.18 The article began by acknowledging that Savile was known for his fundraising and his tireless work for hospitals. Many regarded him as a “wayward saint”. “But”, it said, “there is another side to the 55-year-old disc jockey. A dark side never revealed before. It is of a ruthless, calculating Jimmy Savile. A man who engineered his own rise to the top with cold precision. A man who is not scared of violence.”

6.19 The article then moved to what is presented as direct speech from Savile himself:

“The people who work for me call me The Godfather. And nobody messes with The Godfather. He is the boss. The big man. I know how to take care of myself and I know how to take care of anyone who gets a bit cocky, a bit above himself. Some of the hairy things I’ve done would get me ten years inside. I never get physical personally. Let’s just say that while I’m in Edinburgh, very dodgy things happen in London. I’m quite innocent - I’m out of the way.

“It boils down to money. Very effective stuff, money. I learnt that in the dance hall business. And when I ran a dance hall I ruled it with a rod of iron. So much so that the local police told me I was cuffing trouble-makers around too much and getting a bit too heavy handed. I told them I couldn’t compromise. Right is right and wrong is wrong in my book. If anyone misbehaved in my place they got a thick ear. The copper told me any more thick ears and I’d be nicked. I said I didn’t care – hooligans and idiots were not going to get away with anything in my place. A couple of nights later one of my guys came to me and said there was a geezer lying on the pavement outside looking up the girls’ skirts as they came in and shouting out what colour knickers they were wearing. My guys looked to me to give them the judgment of Solomon. Which I did. I said “By all means let him lie there. Just make sure his eyes are closed”. They went outside and kicked his head in. They left him lying there concussed. Round came a police inspector. I said: “Before you open your book, let me tell you something. Your daughter is 16. She comes here. You let her because you know that she’ll be looked after here – like all the parents in this town know I’ll take care of their daughters. If some dirty bastard is going to lie on the pavement looking up their kilts, I’m going to stop him.” He shut his book and walked out. A few minutes later his sergeant came in and said “Inspector’s compliments – you didn’t give the bastard half enough”.

6.20 A little later in the article, Savile is quoted as saying:

“When you are The Godfather you can’t have your troops getting a cut of the action. They only like it because you are strong and ruthless and they know you’re as tricky as a box of monkeys. I have rules and one of the most important ones is that if someone fancies another bloke’s girl he’s got to ask the other bloke if he has finished with her. You must always do the fella the honour of asking. If she is still in favour, then it’s hands off. So when one DJ tried to pull my bird, I fixed him. Now here was this guy who thought he was going to pull one of my ladies while my back was turned. If he’d done the decent thing and asked, it would have been different. I came back after three days away and the girl told me she’d been invited out by this guy. I said: “This is what you do. Go out with him, get him to take you for a very expensive meal and try to get him to stomp [*sic*] up for a bottle of champagne. Then, at a quarter past eleven, you get a terrible headache and leave”. She thought it was an evil thing to do, but I said: “That is the way it has got to be”. I waited outside the restaurant, and at 11.15 out she came, leaving him to finish the champagne alone. Then it was round to my place. She’d been fed and watered and everything was marvellous”.

6.21 The story ends with Savile humiliating the disc jockey the next day at the dance hall by telling the tale to the rest of the staff and giving the disc jockey the nick name “Meals on Wheels”. Savile says that the disc jockey thought he was going to have his legs broken (“it wouldn’t be anything unusual”) but he decided not to as then the disc jockey would have received sympathy.

6.22 Savile explains that he does not have personal feelings:

“It’s the same with my ladies. I cannot ever afford to get involved. I like all the girls I’ve known enormously. I can afford to like them because I don’t want anything from them. If you make love to a girl it’s a non-emotional thing. ...

They aren't trying to get me into a corner – and I'm not trying to do the same to them. I'm logical and mechanical in my dealings with women – and a lot of girls don't like that. They want a man they can get to – a man they can ring up, say: "I'm going to kill myself" and get a reaction. If they rang me up and said that, I'd probably say "Do you want the address of EXIT?"

6.23 The following day, 12 April 1983, the *Daily Mail* published an article in which it said that there was speculation that the revelations in *The Sun* the previous day might have damaged Savile's future career and wondered whether he would keep his favoured status with the Prime Minister and members of the Government. Bunny Lewis, described as Savile's agent, was reported to have explained that things were "a bit of a rough and tumble" when Savile was working in the dance halls so there was "a grain of truth" in *The Sun* article. Mr Lewis said that he found it "incredible that he [Savile] agreed to do the interview" and said that he was "very naïve about some things". Savile himself was reported as saying that the interviewer had "coloured up" some of his reminiscences but that the gist of it was true. He explained that he had been tough when working the dance halls but he had to be to protect the innocent majority. He said that he did not think that the majority of the people in Britain would necessarily disagree with him. He left himself to the judgment of the British people. He certainly did not deny the content of the interview; nor am I aware of any evidence that he sued in defamation.

6.24 The second article in *The Sun*, appearing on 12 April 1983, was headed:

"HOW I PICK UP GIRLS ON THE MARATHON. They have to make all the running for me, says JIMMY SAVILE"

The text begins as follows:

"I like girls. Plenty of them. Before I go out, I write my telephone number half a dozen times on bits of paper and put them in my pocket. If I see a beautiful girl I like I hand her one and say, 'If you're not going to get married in the next ten years, give us a ring'. I do it in marathons, too. When I'm running along and I pass a fantastic girl, I give her one of my bits of paper and say, 'If you want to come training with me, here's the number'. I might get a couple of phone calls... It doesn't mean I expect girls who ring me to jump into bed with me. But I don't live like a monk. I have a busy sex life – as long as the circumstances are right and it's not hurting anyone. ... If it's a matter of enjoying the ladies and the ladies are prepared to be enjoyed, then by all means. But I wouldn't dream of using anyone. It's got to be a 50:50 thing."

6.25 He says that, if each of them is willing "there's no reason why we can't both have a terrific time". He continues:

"I live my life my way, and the girls come into it for the fun part. But I never have a regular girlfriend."

He says that he has never been anywhere near marriage and has never told a girl he loves her. So because he does not intend to marry, it would be selfish to let a relationship develop too far:

"Most girls want a more permanent relationship, so they tend to disappear. I haven't got an assortment to take to bed. I have to find new ones at least every month".

He never takes a girl out to a "flash restaurant"; fish and chips and a video are his idea of a great evening. He can't take girls to night spots as it would be "murder" (he means he would be mobbed):

"I never ever ring a girl up. Girls have to ring me. That, to me, is the fairest way of going on. ...Going out with Jimmy Savile, who is famous and on telly, might be a big thing for some 20-year-old bird. If I ring her up she might be torn

between her boyfriend - who could be Mr Right - and going out with me. ...I know that I could get a 19-year-old girl into a real spin, whizzing her here there and everywhere with me. Enough to make her pack her bags and leave home.If a girl rings up and says she's going to be in London and can she stay the night, I say Yes. She can sleep on the floor, or in the bath if she wants. Or she can share the kip. The sky's the limit in my one-room pad. I'm not bothered. It's more of a pals' act than a sex act. Making love isn't the way you read about it in magazines."

- 6.26 Later, he says that he would never ever take advantage of a fan. If a girl asks for his autograph, he does not say "You're nice, come home with me for three days". He says that if a fan has come 100 miles and turns up on his doorstep he never invites her in and makes love to her. It might "freak her brain...and it wouldn't be fair". He says that he does not care about his own good name but he does care about upsetting someone's life:

"Parents can trust their 17-year-old daughters with me. They could come and spend the night at my flat ... and I'd never take advantage. ...My girls are career girls, usually over 20".

He says he really cannot accept that it is all right for 16-year old girls to go away with a boyfriend even though their parents might permit it. He concludes:

"I'm very careful to stick to the rules with my girls. I might have five or six in tow at any time, but they all know about the others. And there are no favourites".

- 6.27 On the 13 April 1983, the third and final article appeared. It was mainly about Savile's charity work in hospitals. It was headed:

"I TOLD A SUICIDE 29 WAYS TO TOP HIMSELF".

Savile described how he seemed to have the knack of cheering people up and helping them to want to live. The remainder of the article was a rag bag of quotes about such things as how much he charged for a personal appearance (£10,000), his attitude towards owning a Rolls Royce (“people like me are expected to have one”) and the secret of his success (“I am a success still after all these years... because I don’t manufacture myself. What you see is the real me”).

6.28 It seems to me that the first of these articles disclosed that Savile either was a violent and lawless man or *falsely boasted* that he was. Further, it showed that his attitude towards women was that he had rights over them and yet did not care about them. He was prepared to humiliate a disc jockey for a transgression which Savile did not in fact care about. He seems to have wanted to assert his power over that man, to show who was the boss.

6.29 In the second article he showed either that he was a man without emotion in personal relationships or *falsely boasted* that he was. Although he admitted to or falsely claimed that he had contravened all conventional views of sexual morality, he denied any breach of the law and claimed to be particularly careful of the welfare of girls in their teens. From what we now know of him, his hypocrisy is staggering. But the point of this chapter is not to demonstrate that but to show how much information was in the public domain which, if read, would have warned people of his true nature.

6.30 As I shall later explain, this material was scarcely noticed in the BBC. The Press Log, a daily record of all media items which were of concern to the BBC, does not mention these articles. They were, however, noticed by the Honours Committee and, as I have already mentioned, caused a delay of several years in

the granting of the honour which Savile greatly coveted, his knighthood.

The Independent on Sunday 1990

6.31 Shortly after he received his knighthood in 1990, Savile was interviewed by Lynn Barber and she wrote about him in *The Independent on Sunday* of 22 July 1990. Ms Barber gave evidence to the Savile investigation. In the article, she reported how thrilled and relieved Savile had been to receive his knighthood. They talked about whether and why there had been some delay in his appointment. She observed that, for the past several years, tabloid journalists had been saying that he must have a serious skeleton in his cupboard; otherwise he would have got a knighthood by then. Savile agreed that he had had:

“a lively couple of years, with the tabloids sniffing about, asking round the corner shops – everything – thinking there must be something the authorities knew that they didn’t. Whereas in actual fact I’ve got to be the most boring geezer in the world because I ain’t got no past, no nothing. And so, if nothing else, it was a ginormous relief when I got the knighthood, because it got me off the hook.”

Ms Barber agreed that there had been a persistent rumour about him for years and journalists had often told her, as a fact, that Savile was ‘into’ little girls. But, asked Ms Barber rhetorically, if they know it, why haven’t they published it? She wrote:

“*The Sun* or *The News of the World* would hardly refuse the chance of featuring a Jimmy Savile sex scandal. It is very, very hard to prove a negative, but the fact that the tabloids have never come up with a scintilla of evidence against Jimmy Savile is as near proof as you can ever get.”

6.32 Ms Barber then describes how she plucked up the courage to put it to Savile that people said that he liked 'little girls'. She noted that he reacted with "a flurry of funny-voice Jimmy Savile patter, which is what he does when he's getting his bearings". He batted away the suggestion, explaining that the pop business was "teenagers...So when I go anywhere it's the young ones that come round me" – and those teenagers were interested in the pop stars Savile knew, not Savile himself. Savile understood the difference:

"But if I'd said, 'Come round, so that I can tell you stories about *me*' or 'Come round so that you can fall into my arms' they'd have said '*What! On yer bike!*' But because reporters don't understand the nuances of all that, they say, 'A-ha'."

6.33 Ms Barber accepted this as a "perfectly credible explanation of why rumour links him to young girls" but thought it still did not explain "the great mystery of his non-existent love life". He was devoted to his mother but, pressed on his love life – and specifically that he must have had some sex at some time – Savile looked pained:

"Well. I would have thought so. But it's rather like going to the bathroom. I've never been one to explain to people what I do when I go to the bathroom and I'm not a kiss-and-tell punter. All I can say is that I've never ever got anybody into trouble; I've never knowingly upset anybody; and I've always been aware that in my game there is a clear line between infatuation and actual, genuine liking. Other than that, you must draw your own conclusions."

6.34 His comments are strangely defensive. Ms Barber concluded that he did not like sex very much and that his views on sex and love were "altogether cynical", with Savile making passing comments that "sex was like what they say about policemen – never there when you want one" and "it so happens that it is

illegal to have sex on tap – unless you happen to be married, in which case you end up with a wife having a headache”.

- 6.35 The article goes on to describe his avoidance of marriage and relationships, his peripatetic lifestyle and his hectic schedule. Ms Barber observes that:

“It is a life of self-punishing austerity which seems like a long expiation for some lasting sense of guilt... It is a constant theme of his conversation – his need to go to bed with a clean conscience, to feel that he has done his best.”

- 6.36 It is easy, with hindsight, to read something sinister into these observations and there is certainly a thread of unease running through the article. With uncanny insight, Ms Barber describes the “disconcerting experience” of touring the Stoke Mandeville wards with Savile: “when he coos over a young woman paraplegic ‘A-ha, now I can have my way with you, my dear!’ one can only pray that she appreciates the joke”. But these ‘clues’, if they were such, remained disparate. The strap-line for the article referred to “the tireless Jimmy Savile [*who*] occupies a unique place in the nation’s life” and, despite her evident reservations about him, Ms Barber ended the piece by telling Savile that he seemed to be “almost saintly”.

Television and Radio Broadcasts

Open to Question 1988

- 6.37 On 29 September 1988, Savile took part in a BBC programme called *Open to Question* in which he was questioned by an audience of young people. The presenter/chairman was Krishnan Guru-Murthy. One questioner asked whether Savile saw an intellectual contradiction between his “tabloid claim of having sex in a passion wagon” and his profession of the Roman Catholic faith. Savile’s initial response was to suggest

that the questioner must be the only person in the world who believed newspapers. Mr Guru-Murthy reminded him that he had made a similar claim on a television programme called *Pillow Talk* and asked him to deal with the question. Savile said that the *Pillow Talk* programme was just a bit of fun where he was expected to say outrageous things. It was all just fun and he asked “can’t anyone have any fun in their life anymore?” He had evaded the question.

6.38 Another questioner then asked Savile if he had an ideal woman and if so what she was like? Savile said that he had never met her and the ones he met could not stand him for longer than five years or ten years or maybe five minutes or five seconds. He said he had no paternal feelings so did not want offspring. He could not be serious for long and would be a pain in the neck for that reason. A third questioner then suggested to him that he did not seem to have a high regard for women and asked if he felt that women were inferior to him or if he was frightened of them. Savile said that women came from a different planet from men but claimed that there was nothing in his writings which suggested that he did not respect women. He respected “ladies like he hoped they respected fellas” and then added “I can’t be serious. I can’t be serious”.

6.39 A little later he was asked how he would react as a Roman Catholic if one of his partners became pregnant. He said that he would ask “Who was it” as he boarded the train for Hong Kong. He said it had never happened and it never would. He would not have it on his conscience.

6.40 Another questioner returned to the first theme, asking whether Savile’s claim to have had hundreds of girls on planes and trains etc. was in contradiction to his religious beliefs. The following exchange then took place:

JS: Well, it all depends, you see. I happen to be in the pop business. You cannot go through the pop business without knowing lots of young ladies. But the newspapers will juice it up no end, you see. And if they juice it up no end, that's the way that they work. And, of course, in the pop business you'll have a lot of girlfriends. But I ain't never married them. But I'm still friendly with girls that I knew years and years and years and years ago. Even those that got married. You can actually have a friendship with somebody without cleaving to them forever. You see, yeah.

Q: Assuming the stories we read about you are true, don't you think you are a bad influence on the youth of today? With ...

JS: You tell me. Am I a bad influence on you?

Q: I don't know, but ... with the claims that you've had hundreds of girls, especially with the fear of AIDS going about today ...

JS: Yeah ...

Q: ... don't you think you're a bad influence on young people?

JS: If I would have had claims...I've never claimed to have had hundreds of ladies but if the newspapers have claimed I have ... then obviously they must be talking about the times when I was on Top of the Pops and that was years and years and years ago. And AIDS wasn't around then for starters, number one. Number two, I must admit that in terms of romance and etc., I have got to be a bit boring because I don't drink, I smoke cigars ... this is a terrible thing, girls don't like it when you smoke cigars 'cause you stink all their clothes out ... and they actually find me a little bit boring. So, all that claim about hundreds is just not true. Sorry about that...very boring.

6.41 It seems that, in this passage, the questioner was referring to passages in Savile's own book *As It Happens* and he was denying what he had written there. Then, a little later, Savile was asked what would happen on judgment day and his

response was very similar to the passage on that topic in *God'll fix it*: see paragraphs 6.13-6.14 above.

- 6.42 To my mind, the significance of this part of *Open to Question* was the suggestion that Savile's moral stance showed a bad example to young people and that he was a bad influence on them. He did not answer that question. I think that any sensible person watching that programme and hearing the way in which Savile avoided giving any sensible answer to what were clearly intended to be serious questions about his moral code would have thought that Savile might well be a bad influence on young people.

In the Psychiatrist's Chair – Anthony Clare

- 6.43 In 1991, Dr Anthony Clare interviewed Savile as part of his series, *In the Psychiatrist's Chair*. Savile's interview revealed, as Dr Clare observed in his commentary in the 1992 collection of selected interviews from the series⁸³, both an emphasis on money and a denial of feelings. Savile insisted that he had no emotions, had not found his feelings yet and did not know what love was. He sparred with Dr Clare about whether there was a good reason to get married.
- 6.44 Savile said he did not like children ("hate them") and "that's why I get on well with them". Savile was aware of the risk of scandal for celebrities generally, but the possibility of a libel suit meant that "... if anybody tells lies about us today that means we finish up with even more money and that'll do for me, so we've got even less to worry about". As for scandal about Savile himself:

"if you turned my stone over there ain't nothing underneath it. It's probably a boring stone for somebody like you who wants to find things out

⁸³ A. Clare, *In the Psychiatrist's Chair*, William Heinemann, 1992.

about people. What you're seeing is actually what there is, full stop".

6.45 Savile prized "ultimate freedom" above all else, but thought that it brought challenge and even danger. He said:

"The tough thing in life is ultimate freedom, that's when the battle starts. Ultimate freedom is what it's all about, because you've got to be very strong to stand for ultimate freedom... Ultimate freedom is the big challenge. Now, I've got it, and I can tell you there's not many of us that have got ultimate freedom. With doing the things that I do, wearing the caps that I wear, I've got some considerable clout as well, all over, that is where the battle, the personal battle starts now. I would like to think that I've beaten that because I don't use my clout or coin or whatever for bad purposes... When you get it you've got to be very strong to handle it...It's marvellous but it's dangerous."

6.46 While Savile felt he had managed to handle ultimate freedom, he said "it would be easy to be corrupted by many things, when you've got ultimate freedom, especially when you've got clout".

6.47 There is, in my view, lurking in these comments, a hint – but I can put it no higher than that – that Savile had been tempted to use his ultimate freedom inappropriately. Looking back, and in the knowledge of the Lynn Barber revelations, Dr Clare himself thought there was "something chilling about this twentieth-century 'saint' which still intrigues me to this day. No, not an easy interview but, for me at any rate, not a forgettable one either".

Is This Your Life?

6.48 In 1995, as one of the Channel 4 series of *Is This your Life?* Savile was interviewed by Andrew Neil. These were programmes not unlike the better-known series *This is your Life* but, as Mr Neil explained to the Savile investigation, were intended to be less saccharine, a little harder-edged and

“maybe a little bit more honest”. However, Mr Neil had a difficult task. He wanted to ask Savile some serious questions about his life, his relationships and his moral code; Savile was determined to treat everything as a joke, a tactic which we can now recognise as his favourite means of evading the issue.

6.49 After an introduction in which Savile was shown meeting members of the Royal Family, running for charity and meeting a child with disabilities and where he was described as a great British institution whom few actually knew, Savile swaggered onto the stage; if he knew that what was coming was to be challenging, he did not appear to be worried. He dealt quite sensibly with questions about his relationship with his mother. When the questions turned to asking him about relationships with girls, he started to get up, pretending that he was about to leave. A film clip of Charles Hulligan (an old friend and former head porter at Leeds General Infirmary) was played, in which he spoke of Savile’s interest in young ladies (adding quickly “of a proper age – 16 onwards”). Savile said that he was “all for girls that do not know too much”. When it was suggested to him that he had had so many women that he could not remember them all, he just joked that maybe he had and that no one “need be ashamed of his working clothes”. He agreed that he did not like long relationships. Charles Hulligan then suggested in the film clip that Savile used to say that he could not stick with a person for more than three days. Savile agreed but said that the girls would get bored with him. When asked why he was not married he said he did not know but Jesus did not find any problem with being single, and neither did he. When asked whether he had had lots of lovers in the 1960s and 1970s, he said he could not remember; it was a long time ago, he would hope so but Mr Neil would have to look to see if there were any marks on his neck.

- 6.50 Savile was then pressed on this issue and replied that he was a gentleman and gentlemen never grassed on a lady. When Mr Neil said he did not want names, only confirmation of Savile's general lifestyle, Savile's response was to start eating a banana and to talk with his mouth full. When asked why he had shied away from close relationships, he laughed and offered a close relationship to any lady in the audience who was not spoken for.
- 6.51 He was then asked why he had, in the past, avoided close relationships. He said it was not his fault; he had never been in the same town for more than 48 hours. He said that he fell in love several times a day and wanted to get married straightaway but then the lights changed or the train pulled out and he had to move on. When asked if he had casual sexual relationships, Savile jumped with mock alarm at the use of the "S-word" and said he was "Mr No-Grass here". Then he pretended to catch on to what Mr Neil was asking about and said that, if any lady had told him that she wanted that sort of relationship, he would sacrifice himself and would tell her to "feel free to use me". When Mr Neil asked whether relationships were matters for Savile to joke about and whether Savile had ever been seriously in love, he said that he had not and he did not know why. He thought that love was not all it was "puffed up to be". He was asked why the public never saw him with a woman. Savile said this was because 'these women' did not really exist and that his playboy image was just a façade. Asked whether it was on account of his special relationship with his mother that he had not formed other long-term relationships with women he said that it was not; that would be an easy explanation but it was not so.
- 6.52 Savile then changed tack and said that he had had plenty of close relationships and that he told lies when it suited him, but

he was not going to grass. If he talked about his relationships, the tabloid press would start asking for names. At this stage, he was bouncing up and down in his chair, laughing at his own humour. Returning to his mother, he said that if he had taken a girl home his mother would have slung the girl out when he (Savile) was out of the room, because she did not want to lose the luxuries which he provided. So he used to give his mother "a few quid" to go away on holiday so that he could take his girls in to the house. Asked about his relationships with men, he spoke emotionally about the death of a friend in the Royal Marines. When asked if it was easier for him to have relationships with men than women he joked again: "No, no, no, no, no, I'm very weak. I can resist everything except temptation". The conversation then turned to other matters not related to his sexual life.

6.53 Mr Neil told me that he felt that the conversation about sexual matters showed Savile to be on the defensive: "*I felt that there was definitely something shifty about him, and that we were not being given the full story*". But he added that the interview was made easier for Savile because the audience was wholly on Savile's side. Mr Neil could feel the hostility from the audience as the questions got tougher. It was as if he had no right to grill a national treasure. Also, when the programme was over, the television audience reaction, shown in telephone calls to the duty office, was overwhelmingly critical of him (Mr Neil) and sympathetic towards Savile. The gist of the complaints was that Mr Neil had been impertinent and should not have spoken in that way to a man who had done so much good for charity. Mr Neil felt that this attitude spoke volumes for the cult of celebrity and also explained why Savile was able to proceed in the way he did, with the protection of public opinion.

6.54 I agree with Mr Neil's view on these points. It seems to me that it was quite legitimate for Mr Neil to question Savile about his sexual life, given that Savile had written about it and had allowed others to write about it. I also agree with him that Savile came over as evasive and shifty but it was clear that the audience loved him.

When Louis Met Jimmy

6.55 In April 2000, the BBC broadcast *When Louis Met Jimmy*, a documentary made by Louis Theroux. By this time, Savile's television career was essentially over and he presented (to my eyes at least) as a rather sad, lonely old man. The filming was spread over several days and, for a man who had kept his private life to himself for so long, it seems strange that he would permit a film crew into his home as he did. Mr Theroux told me that he thought that Savile had been missing the public attention he was used to.

6.56 In conversation, Savile repeated his denial of feelings and discomfort with the idea of marriage. This was something he left "to other people", as the girls he knew "specialise in brain damage". Indeed, "anything more than two hours" would result in brain damage, he thought. He clearly meant that such contact would drive him mad. He denied having emotions "cos it's easier. It's easier. Say you've got emotions and then you got to explain them for two hours. The truth is I'm very good at masking them".

6.57 As well as reinforcing Savile's strangely solitary life, the film contained some startling revelations about his 'zero tolerance' policy in dance halls in Leeds. In what appears to have been an unguarded moment late at night while talking to the film crew in Mr Theroux's absence, Savile explained that he would not tolerate "any nonsense whatsoever" and was "always in trouble

with the law for being heavy-handed". Savile described how he would tie people up and put them down in the boiler room until two o'clock in the morning, by which time they would "plead to get out". Savile was the "judge, jury and executioner" in these instances and, if the police told Savile he was too heavy-handed, he would retort that the police would presumably want him to look after their 16-year old daughter if she had come into town. This worked, he said, with him never getting "nicked". Later in the programme, Savile dismissed this anecdote as simply a "figure of speech", but that is not how the story comes across.

- 6.58 The programme is littered with other unattractive comments by Savile. For example: that if the film were negative about him, he would "see you in court, take a few quid off you, same as take a few quid off anybody, money has no conscience". He made one of his regular jokes saying that he was "feared in every girls' school in Britain". Early in the programme, he said "I can get anything, me. There's nothing I can't get, and there's nothing I can't do". The film showed his habit of kissing, uninvited, female members of the public who came his way.
- 6.59 Savile described his caravan as his "love nest", where he had been able to see women away from his mother – to do so in the flat they then shared in Scarborough would have shown a lack of respect. Savile also described how he used to sleep outside Broadcasting House in his caravan. As for having girlfriends, Savile said that he had "friends that are girls, eight million". But "girlfriend in the sense of today, in sense of, i.e. you are together, don't bother with anyone else etcetera, no, never ... not even for a week".
- 6.60 Towards the end of the film, Savile is drawn into speaking about the rumour and suspicion that surrounded him. Asked why he had said in interviews that he hated children when he

appeared to enjoy their company and have a good rapport with them, Savile explained “obviously I don’t hate ‘em”, but he said it was because:

“... we live in a very funny world and it’s easier for me as a single man to say ‘I don’t like children’ because that puts a lot of salacious tabloid people off the hunt”.

Pressed as to whether this concerned suggestions of paedophilia, Savile continued:

“Yes, yes, yes, oh aye. How do they know whether I am or not? How does anybody know whether I am? Nobody knows whether I am, or not. I know I’m not, so I can tell you from experience that the easy way of doing it, when they say ‘oh you have all them children on Jim’ll Fix It’, is say yeah I hate ‘em.”

Mr Theroux suggested this might raise more suspicion, but Savile replied:

“That’s my policy, that’s the way it goes. That’s what I do, and it’s worked a dream ... A dream.”

6.61 As a postscript I should mention that it has been suggested in the press that the BBC must have taken legal advice before Mr Theroux raised suggestions of paedophilia with Savile. However, Mr Theroux told the Savile investigation that he was not aware of any legal advice being taken. Indeed, he had not planned to ask Savile about paedophilia in advance (and had not discussed this with his editorial team); it was simply something he raised in response to the comment about children made by Savile as referred to above.

6.62 At a late stage of the Savile investigation, I became aware of some evidence relating to *When Louis Met Jimmy* which raised a question of BBC personnel’s awareness of Savile’s sexual misconduct.

- 6.63 When I interviewed Mr Theroux in 2013, he told me that, a week or two after *When Louis Met Jimmy* was broadcast in 2000, he received a letter from two women who told him that, contrary to what Savile had said in the documentary, Savile had had many girlfriends and they were two of them. I interpose to say that, now that I have seen a transcript of the letter, the two women wrote that they had been friends with Savile for well over thirty years and that several of Savile's ex-girlfriends were friendly with each other, had stayed in touch with each other and had had a reunion with him three or four years earlier.
- 6.64 Mr Theroux told the Savile investigation in 2013 that, about a year later (which would be 2001) he and his director had met the two women who had said that one of them had started a sexual relationship with Savile when she was only 15. Mr Theroux said that he therefore realised that Savile had committed a criminal offence by having sex with a girl of 15. However, because it had happened over 30 years previously and because the woman in question was then in her 40s and capable of making a complaint to the police if she wanted to and was very concerned (like the other woman he met) that Savile did not know that they were meeting Mr Theroux, he did not consider that he should do anything about what he had been told. Accordingly, when he met Savile on two or three subsequent occasions, he did not mention the fact that he had spoken to these two women or that he knew that Savile had had sex with one of them when she was only 15. In any event, he said that he did not think that what he had learned demonstrated that Savile was a paedophile; he felt that he had discovered that Savile's real sexual interest was in teenage girls, which he thought was unsavoury, but he did not think that, at the time, that there was any obligation on him to do anything about what he had learned.

- 6.65 At a late stage of the Savile investigation, we learned that Mr Theroux had spoken to a more senior colleague at the BBC about what he had been told about Savile's relationship with the 15 year old girl. I spoke to Mr Theroux again, who told me that that he had not only discussed this matter with the director who had accompanied him to the meeting, but also with David Mortimer, his Executive Producer. Mr Mortimer was abroad when we wanted to speak to him, but provided some written answers to questions put to him.
- 6.66 Mr Mortimer confirmed that Mr Theroux and his director came to see him after they had met the two women in question. He was told that one of the women had said that a sexual relationship with Savile had begun when she was 15 and that the tone of the meeting had been relaxed and that the women in question had wanted to correct Savile's assertion in *When Louis Met Jimmy* that he had never had a girlfriend. Mr Mortimer was told that neither of the women was concerned about the issue and that they did not have any desire to go public with the information they had provided. He remembered being told that neither woman alluded to any abuse having taken place and that they made it clear that the relationships with Savile had been consensual.
- 6.67 Mr Theroux told me that his interest in this information was of a professional and journalistic nature, in that he had discovered something about Savile which had not been discovered when the documentary had been made. Mr Theroux repeated what he had said to the Savile investigation in 2013, namely that the women were very concerned that Savile did not know that they were meeting him and that the woman in question was then in her 40s and could make a complaint to the police if she wanted to.

- 6.68 Mr Mortimer's recollection was slightly different in that he remembered becoming aware of the serious nature of the information and discussing how the information should be dealt with. He also remembered being told that the two women had said that their relationships were consensual and had continued beyond their 20s and that the meeting with the women had taken place in confidence and on the basis of an explicit understanding that the conversation was one where the normal journalistic convention demanded that the confidentiality of the two women should be protected at all costs. Therefore, what they had said could not be reported to a third party without their express permission to do so. That permission had clearly not been forthcoming.
- 6.69 It does not appear to me that either Mr Theroux or Mr Mortimer should be criticised in any way for their responses to the information they received. I think it would have been an unacceptable intrusion into this adult woman's life either to tell her that she was a victim of Savile or that she should tell the police about what he had done or for Mr Theroux or Mr Mortimer to take any action themselves to raise this issue independently. This conversation appears to have taken place in confidence and on the basis that the confidentiality imposed by the two women should be respected. In any event, even if Mr Mortimer had reported the information he received upwards, it appears that nothing could possibly have been done, given that the women concerned did not wish to make a complaint to the police. By that time, Savile was not working for the BBC; *Jim'll Fix It* had been discontinued in 1994 and Savile had long since stopped working on *Top of the Pops*. Mr Mortimer could not have been expected to foresee that the BBC would bring Savile back to appear on the final *Top of the Pops* show in 2006.

Have I Got News for You

6.70 Savile appeared on *Have I Got News for You* on 28 May 1999. The show was hosted by Angus Deayton and the other panellists were Ian Hislop, Paul Merton and Diane Abbott MP. Savile was on Mr Hislop's team.

6.71 Savile repeated some of his familiar lines about wrestling and avoiding domestic relationships. He said that he was still a wrestler and was "feared in every girls' school in this country" (this comment attracting raised eyebrows from Ms Abbott).

6.72 Of his caravan lifestyle, Savile said:

"12 years I lived in a motor caravan, yes. Marvellous life, you've heard of new age travellers, haven't you? ... I'm an old age traveller."

6.73 Asked by Mr Hislop what he did in the caravan, Savile quipped "Anybody I can lay me hands on". This prompted laughter and applause, but also raised eyebrows from Mr Hislop.

6.74 Mr Deayton asked if it were true that none of the places in which Savile had lived had kitchens. Savile said:

"They don't have stoves ... because anybody who is intent on staying single, the biggest off-putting thing in the world to a lady is the fact there's no stove, so she can't cook anything. ... It's something of the domestic-cleaning in them and they come in the kitchen and say, 'What, no stove?' and they immediately go."

Summary

6.75 Reading this material now, with the benefit of what we know about Savile's true nature, one is struck by the amount of adverse material in the public domain, by the lack of serious impact it had and by the man's extraordinary confidence that it would not damage him. For example, he was prepared to talk openly about the fact that he had numerous casual sexual

relationships with women who were decades younger than him, without any apparent fear that anyone would pop up and say “Yes and I was only 15 when you did it to me”.

6.76 But setting aside the benefit of hindsight, Savile comes over as deeply unattractive. Just taking this material at face value, I find it surprising that ‘the Great British Public’ continued to love him until his death. Were the values in society really so different from those of today? Maybe people thought he was only joking.

6.77 Having said that, I must explain that my purpose in collecting this material together is to provide context for my examination of the BBC’s awareness of Savile’s sexual misconduct.