

Submission on Workplace Bullying

[REDACTED]

I want this story published so that others in future, especially my own daughter, will not suffer the way I have, but more the point, to show that it can happen to anyone, no matter what role or identity you have.

I was the Head Mathematics teacher of [REDACTED] ACT for 29 years. After 23 years, a new Principal came who decided she did not want anyone in key leadership roles for a long time to be there at all.

Over time she achieved this and only a few coordinators from before her time remain.

To put you in the picture I had a very high community profile, was very highly regarded by kids and parents and ran PD, Maths Enrichment programs etc for all ACT schools. I am a

This of course made her feel inadequate and jealous-though I did not realise it at the time.

Tactics used were lies, setting one up for failure or entrapment, spying, being asked to attend meetings and told nothing was being recorded and then receiving a letter of record, alterations to timetables at the 11th hour etc, constant criticism over tiny matters and ignoring of positive achievements.

I can produce lots of letters to support my claims. There are many staff, ex-staff and parents who will support my evidence.

I would emphasise that teaching and coordinating is a collegial activity and it does not work when there is bullying and harassment which is what I experienced despite total commitment and service to the school and the system. I frequently worked 70 hours per week.

It goes without saying that the type of behaviour is psychopathic and is not believed by outsiders such as some parents, bishops, priests etc as she can be so charming to those who do not know her. This is all done under the guise of religion.

I was referred to a book "Monsters at Work" subtitled "How to Deal with the Workplace Psychopath" and felt it was written about [REDACTED] with the names changed. It was so close to what occurred to me and others. It is worth reading- written by a J. Clarke in Sydney.

I glean from this that she has some sort of narcissistic personality disorder-though I am no expert on such matters, people who I know who are, and have suggested the same.

The tactic of an ambush was very common, followed by letters with copies to everyone. An ambush is when the victim expects a different agenda. As well as being 'famous' for Maths, the other issue within the school I was known for was the YEAR 10 retention program. When this principal had been at the school only 5 weeks she asked me to come to see her about what I do with this year 10 program. Acting in good faith and not at that time knowing her form at her previous school, I took all my Yr10 files to her office and when I got in there, Year 10 was not mentioned. She was sitting there with a lackey note-taker and proceeded to tell me I was not a coping manager and that there was going to be an appraisal process and I was going to fail it and she wanted a number of us to leave and the appraisal was the weapon to obtain this.

Later I got a letter to this effect. When challenged in writing about the Year 10 agenda, she rewrote the story as usual and said that I must have misunderstood things as the meeting was not intended to be about Year10 at all!!

Even though the Union was useless, they even challenged her on this type of thing a number of times, but the Catholic Education Office (CEO) being the corrupt institution it is, backed her each time.

This is the same organisation that recently had its senior paymaster jailed despite him having passed 5 internal and external audits!! The Director of any decent organisation would have stood aside while the court heard the case-not this lot!

I lodged an official workplace harassment case and the Catholic Education Office did not bother to hear it. Later when I complained to the [REDACTED] about this, they lied and said they had heard it! He either was dumb enough to believe them or was complicit in this type of behaviour; I tend to think the latter. This is no joke.

When I had an exit interview, I was promised compensation in the form of among other things, pay out of my sick leave and some other minor things; then I got a letter from the director to say "case closed". They of course would not admit there was a problem as they appointed her and did not wish to admit the drastic mistake they made.

The whole process was an abhorrent abuse of power.

Nepotism and cronyism is rife throughout the Catholic Education system in the ACT. Everyone knows about it-even the staff in the public schools is aware and joke about it. Anyone who says anything about it is then threatened with legal action-it is a constant weapon to shut people up.

In a time when the nation is drastically short of maths teachers I am no longer teaching Maths because of this bullying. Luckily I got another job using Maths in the Senior assessment system of the ACT, where respect for all under intelligent leadership shows the difference between a culture of professionalism and a cult-like culture.

I had to endure this type of thing for years, as I have a daughter with long term health issues-not that this matters to the Catholic Church in this area anyway!!.

In 2006 I won a scholarship to a World Conference on Maths Competitions in Cambridge. When I returned I was harassed by three of this persons cronies about a minor thing over a class placement. During the cult-like grilling session, with the 3 of them, one of them, a male started crying in case I was going to tell everyone in the Maths community in ACT the truth and he would have a bad name!! I couldn't believe this weird cult-like behaviour. The staff was then asked to submit any good news stories for a newsheet and though I wrote about the scholarship, it was never mentioned –the same edition did however have an article about Water Polo, where this fellow had been involved.

This shows the immature nature of the bullying.

The actual trivial point they were looking for was tiny compared to the stuff-ups she caused, as organisation of a meeting was way beyond her. Yet when a particular meeting did not happen one time the CEO believed her- that it was I, (and hence my fault), who did not show. The megalomaniac is often convincing to the outsider.

At other times, the union rep had his emails spied upon.

I was given info from inside the CEO that they were spying on me and others-so with the help of a 2 friends I trialled out a “reverse entrapment” and sure enough proved it- Keystone Cops.!!

This same principal at one time had a relative of herself working in my department and we did not know this was the case.

Further this Principal, when she was a deputy Principal at another school, before [REDACTED], had spent a number of years trying to get rid of the Maths coordinator there.

The white-anteing of my position was constant; a group of staff of limited ability got promoted into position of power and operated on her behalf-a type of lynch mob. Ultimately the academic side of the school was downgraded in favour of other aspects.

She kicked me out of running the AST (the ACT Year 12 scaling test) where we had been very successful for 8 years prior(7 to her arrival); in the following 3 years our results slumped to the extent that we came last in 2005. The following year, after that, I was given the role for the whole ACT. This shows a low level intellect this person operated from.

And herein lies a crux of this story...it is the more able who are the victims of this thing at the hands of the dumb! The insecure threatened manager is everywhere. My friends in other industries say this type of thing is common.

She was not just dumb but blatant. She awarded most of the school's printing contracts to a printing firm owned by her husband. People inside and external to the school joke about this!!

If politicians are serious about "clever country" and this *productivity* word, there would be bipartisan support to enforce massive fines, name/shame and dismissal of workplace bullies. Legal means must be set up so that no bullying complaint can be fobbed off.

This type of thing is devastating to the victim. Every time you would get an email or letter from the Principal, *I was* terrified on opening it in case it was another of her attacks. It is a blatant abuse of power, done with public funding.

I am lucky in that I have thousands of friends, have no mortgage, no health issues and am well balanced. If on the other hand I was a loner or someone with few friends or a disturbed family or money or health problems or had some other weakness, the consequences of this could have been drastic.

One ex-staff member who was forced out was in a fragile position; when a number of us arranged to have an afternoon tea for her, the Principal gave orders that we were not to socialise with this person, even outside of school. I am still unclear where this fits with the Christian part, but a number of us saw to it that the person was ok and from what I hear now has a new job with decent managers.

Do you see how this type of thing can lead to the tragic outcome that happened to that little girl in Melbourne?

Feel free to pass this on to anyone who is interested.

I am intending seeking legal compensation in some form or other, but as an individual and seeing the way the Church/Vatican responds to victims of other types of abuse, and the way James Hardie did to asbestos victims (not sure who learnt from whom!!), what can I do?

What I can do is hope by making this known that in future, young staff coming along, don't have to endure this because they are really good at their job. Already I know people in number of industries, including schools, who say they deliberately under-perform to avoid this type of thing.

But even more than this, I am writing this for all future workers, the ones who struggle and who are not very capable but do their best, those with illness and disability and those who are just trying to live.

No one should have to put up with what happened to me.