

URL <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/nation/choirboy-haunted-by-painful-memories/story-e6frg6nf-1226639101313>

Choirboy haunted by painful memories

by: *Amanda Gearing*

From: *The Times*

May 10, 2013 9:03AM

IT was in the magnificent Manchester Cathedral that Eli Ward's pure soprano attracted the attention of the new dean, the Reverend Robert Waddington.

When Waddington called for volunteers to help him polish the gold leaf on the altar railings, several choirboys came forward. Among them was Eli, a working-class 11-year-old from a council estate, who loved singing in the choir and was happy to help.

While cleaning the altar rails, Waddington dropped his brush and blurted out "Shit!" Eli was horrified that a man of God would swear in God's house. But the dean made a joke of it, drawing the boy into his confidence. Soon Waddington was collecting Eli in his Peugeot for choir practice and gradually grooming him for sex.

Waddington arranged for Eli to stay at the deanery, making up a spare bed in the dean's bedroom. He cultivated the boy's tastes in wine and clothes, and taught him to speak a cultured accent and write grammatical English. "I was his project," Mr Ward, now says. "Every time I pick up a glass of wine or on my shoes, I am reminded of Waddington."

Soon the interaction allegedly became more sinister. Waddington began kissing and embracing the boy. The alleged abuse continued for several years and increased in severity, until the dean had the boy regularly staying at his house and sleeping in his bed, where he regularly fondled, kissed and masturbated the child.



fine
with
40,
put

Waddington, who was in his late 50s to early 60s, invited Eli to play tennis on the bishop's tennis court and took him on holidays to the Lake District, Cornwall and France.

Everything suddenly changed in 1989. Waddington told Eli that if the press should ask him about their relationship, he was to say the dean was his godfather and was helping him prepare for school exams.

After choir conductor Gordon Stewart asked Eli about his relationship with Waddington, the latter forced Eli to leave the choir, but stayed on as the dean of Manchester until 1994.

Eli finished school with poor grades, drifting from job to job. Last year he became suicidal. Thoughts of the sexual abuse resurfaced, but he thought Waddington's death in 2007 meant there was no avenue for justice.

Then he saw reports about the Jimmy Savile case and discovered that police were investigating even though the offender was dead.
