

## Response to Keelan Balderson's 6 Questions About the Hampstead Organized Abuse Case

### **1) Why Do You Believe With No Evidence?**

Short answer: Misleading question, presumes that lack of evidence is 100% established and agreed upon. Strictly speaking, even the children's allegations are a form of evidence.

*One of the most common arguments from believers is that the police did not investigate the allegations that were outlined in the original videos. This isn't an accurate position at all.*

It is relatively accurate and relatively inaccurate. The police did SOME investigation and interviewed one suspect (Dearman). There are conspicuous areas in which the police chose not to investigate allegations or to question (the majority of) suspects. Therefore, it is accurate to state that police did not investigate the allegations *thoroughly*.

By using the term "believers" from the outset, Balderson creates a false polarity. If I question the official story, this does not mean I "believe" every detail of the allegations, only that I do not consider the case to be closed. Balderson is framing the argument in his favor by using language lazily and disingenuously.

*Some allegations are highly improbable. . . . When you couple such implausibility with the investigation that DID take place, and the retractions from the children, the police would have to come to a reasonable conclusion that it simply didn't happen.*

No. Improbability is a largely subjective question. How improbable would Balderson have considered David Icke's claims about Jimmy Savile five years ago? Even if we agree that something is improbable, that is very far from proving it did not happen. And even if one or more the claims could be proven to be false or exaggerated, this is not a solid reason to dismiss all the others. Logically, ALL the allegations of the children ought to have been investigated in a case this serious. To investigate one or two and find them to be false or at least unsubstantiated and then to dismiss the whole case smacks, at best, of an inadequate investigation.

*This then begs the question – if you don't think the police carried out an investigation, or that it wasn't up to the right standards, or that there's a full blown cover-up – and because of this they have not produced any evidence of a satanic cult – why do you believe there is a satanic cult?*

Why is Balderson repeating the buzzword "satanic cult" over and over again? By doing so, he is implying that either a satanic cult is involved or no form of ritual abuse occurred. Also, that anyone who believes some sort of systematized and even ritual abuse did occur believes in a satanic cult. Balderson is thereby reinforcing the lurid aspects of the case, specifically in order to discredit the children's original allegations.

*Regardless of the reason why there's no evidence (most likely because there simply is no evidence)*

Did Balderson personally confirm that there was no evidence? Or did he presume that the local police could be trusted to find and share any evidence that existed? If the latter, why, in a climate in which

every day more evidence comes out that the British police have been suppressing evidence of similar crimes for decades, would Balderson choose to accept the police's declaration of "no evidence"?

*in order for you to believe the allegations, you yourself must have supporting evidence. Without any, your only logical position can be "I think the police should reopen the case," which they actually have. They are seeking interviews with Draper and Christie, who have gone in to hiding.*

In other words, they have shifted their focus away from organized abuse to two suspects involved in making public the original allegations. All the while, choosing not to interview any of the people, besides Dearman, initially named by the children.

*This brings us back round to the crux of the issue. The believers believe, not because they have verified the claims in the videos, but for some other psychological or emotional reason. It's like religious faith.*

This claim is central to Balderson's thesis, which is essentially that "satanic panic" is real, and ritual abuse is not. He hasn't demonstrated this, because the arguments that lead to this conclusion are at best incomplete, at worst flimsy or dishonest. Even if the arguments were sound, they would not establish his conclusion that, "The believers believe . . . for some other psychological or emotional reason. It's like religious faith." This itself is merely Balderson's belief (or so he would have US believe).

Simply stated, the assertion of the predominance of "satanic panic" (i.e., mass hysteria that leads to false belief in ritual abuse) depends on and facilitates a rejection of any given account of ritual abuse. Yet organized and widespread ritual abuse is a proven fact. Just because some people "panic" and revert to Christian or other expressions of horror and outrage in no way alters the reality of the abuse. What it does, often, is to obscure it by mixing up fantasy and fact.

There is ample reason to believe that groups involved in systemized abuse know this, and deliberately introduce more lurid, fantastic, or "satanic" elements into the abuse, at least partially in order to make the allegations less credible should they arise, and to spark off the sort of reaction that helps to cloud the whole thing in hysteria. Balderson is not interested in such nuances, however.

*In fact they often fallaciously argue that the absence of evidence is somehow proof of a cover-up.*

Again, Balderson is focusing on the very worst aspects of the case, and even then he is over-simplifying. To believe that a lack of evidence may be an indication of a cover-up, rather than accepting it as proof that no abuse occurred, is not the same as arguing that zero evidence = proof of a cover-up. To argue that would be absurd, and Balderson above all wants to make anyone who chooses to take the children's first allegations seriously look absurd.

Why is Balderson focusing primarily on the "religious faith" (i.e., gullibility) of the "believers"? Why is he not addressing the actual REASONS why these people believe? The answer appears to be that, if he focuses exclusively on the irrationality of "believers," as if it were an established fact, he reinforces the idea that there is no evidence, and hence no reason besides "religious faith" for them to believe. It is circular logic, with nothing at its center besides Balderson's own "religious faith"—or deliberate misrepresentation.

*Or that because something is possible (such as the doctor being pressured to revise her findings) that it happened. What this demonstrates is that they're not interested in a rational, evidence-based approach, and are therefore not genuinely interested in the truth either.*

Neither is Balderson interested in “a rational, evidence-based approach.” If he were, he would be looking at the arguments being presented by the so-called “believers,” instead of focusing on the weakest or most speculative aspects of their case.

## **2) How Can The Children Articulate Such Detailed Stories Without Coaching?**

Short answer: why would the children need coaching if the stories were true?

*The evidence is now overwhelming that Abraham Christie used violence and intimidation against the children, so they would tell him what he wanted to hear. Once they were out of his reach, they said that this is what happened.*

What evidence? Balderson is using circular logic again: since anyone can see that Christie used violence to get the children to lie, clearly the children were lying. But why is this inherently more likely than that they were terrorized into lying when they made their retractions? He is overwhelming us with his opinions, rather than presenting a strong case.

*While Wilson does not believe that Christie premeditatedly coached them (though it's now clear he did), she clearly does not think the wider body of the story is true.*

Once again, Balderson is stating something as proven on the assumption that everyone agrees with him, that it is now “clear”; yet his article is addressed to people for whom it is anything but clear, obviously. The onus is on Balderson now to show these people why it is “clear” that Christie coached the children, obviously.

*These kids do not have a tough time verbalizing the stories at all – it was Cafcass, it was McDonalds, there was this person, there was that person, and they list it all off without even the slightest bit of hesitation. In fact the boy gets so carried away in one of the original videos that he innocently claims “all the shopkeepers,” and “all the cafes” were involved. All of them!*

Balderson’s assumption here is that the boy’s allegations must be 100% accurate or they must be fabricated. He appears to have no awareness of the difficulty for trauma victims to be clear about what is real and what is not real, which goes double for young children. He also leaves out the very distinct possibility that the children, while being abused in an organized fashion by a specific group, may have been lied to repeatedly regarding who was part of that group, in order to ensure that they didn’t try and tell their experiences to anyone in their immediate community. If the children were made to believe the entire community was involved, they would feel powerless to seek help. There is nothing improbable about this as a strategy to ensure silence.

*So are these children just geniuses like Rain Man, did they take notepads with them to each “weekly” session to note down every detail, did each Satanist introduce themselves and outline their personal information – “hello I’m John Smith and I work at Cafcass, I now live in this town?” Or was it Abraham Christie and Ella Draper hammering home each little factoid within the violent environment the children later explained to police?*

Is it really more credible that the children were able to memorize lines fed to them by a stepfather making up a fictional story, than that they could remember and recount what happened to them, or at

least what they believed happened to them? Is Balderson arguing that children can be trained to recite lies more easily than they can recount things that they believe actually happened to them?

*Despite this, a lot of the "detail" actually turned out to be false anyway. For example there was no secret room found in the church nursery area, and the children later admitted that Abraham forced them to say this. The teacher's "house" where they were allegedly abused, turned out to be a block of flats and was not as described. They admitted that they had never actually been there.*

They later claimed not to have been there, which does not make it true, any more than we can assume their first claim was true. Does Balderson know for a fact that no secret room was found? Did he look? No tunnels were admitted to be under McMartin school during the original investigation and the case was dismissed as satanic panic. Later, tunnels were discovered. Balderson either doesn't know about this or he is choosing not to factor it into his conclusions. In either case, why not? He is making a career partially out of reframing past and current organized abuse allegations in terms of "satanic panic." He ought to at least know his facts.

*Why would police round up the accused and force them to strip off for examinations, if none of the stories add up to begin with? There has to be a level of common sense before we turn it in to a witch hunt.*

Because it is the simplest way to clear it up? Is it accurate to say that "none of the stories added up" just because there were inconsistencies? Again, there are other reasons for such inconsistencies besides jumping to the conclusion that it was all "a hoax."

### **3) Why Do You Say The Police Were Coaching?**

Simple answer: Because the children retracted their original statement.

*Those who are quick to proclaim it impossible for the children to have been coached, are just as quick to claim the police forced the children to retract the allegations and coached them to turn the tables on Abraham Christie. They literally claim the children were coached to say they were coached!*

*At the start of the girl's interview she asks "what do you want me to say?" which has been jumped on as evidence of coaching, but the officer doesn't prompt her or respond by saying "I want you to say this..." So despite the opportunity for coaching, the opportunity was not used. After all it would be pretty foolish to deliberately coach a child in a recorded interview. Believers however are happy to see something that isn't there.*

Balderson is cherry-picking his evidence. It is easy enough in such a case to pick the weakest arguments being made by *some* people, and then use them to discredit the overall conclusions being drawn by other people. Balderson is approaching this as if it were a matter simply of the rational people, like him (who can see there is no evidence for the children's first set of allegations and plenty for the second set), vs. crazy believers who refuse to see this simple truth. But the truth around the case has nothing to do with any one group of people or another (not counting the accused "cult"), only with the facts as they are available to us.

Suggesting that this is a “clear,” cut and dried case if only looked at dispassionately and free from hysteria and religious faith is nonsense. There is nothing cut and dried about it.

Why does Balderson constantly focus on what the “believers” believe rather than *why* they believe it? Is it because his primary aim is to prove that there is no *reason* for them to believe?

*Likewise if the boy was bullied or pressured in to a retraction prior to his interview, why is he so comfortable with the interviewer? Why does he smile with relief after getting it all off his chest, and get happy and excited at the possibility of never seeing Abraham again, who he said he “hated”?*

This seems quite compelling at first glance, but is it? Firstly it’s a subjective statement; secondly and more importantly, it over-simplifies something that is enormously complex. An obvious question to raise here is, is it possible the children were threatened in some way before the retractions were made? It is easy to imagine the nature of such threats, as well as the terrible effect they would have on the children. And if they were made by someone other than the interviewer then there’s no reason the boy wouldn’t be comfortable with him.

Asking why does the boy “smile with relief after getting it off his chest,” even if it were accurate, presumes that the second story is true, so again it is a misleading question. Might he not have smiled with relief at having managed to tell the story the way he was warned to, and so have prevented some terrible thing from happening to him? As for being happy at the thought of never seeing Abraham again, this would also be consistent with his having lied about Abraham , since he might expect to be punished for having done so. It is entirely speculative, either way, but more to the point, Balderson’s descriptions are largely meaningless, because the boy is constantly smiling and expressing mild excitement throughout all three of the interviews, often for no obvious reason and, given the testimony, inexplicably. So referring to these reactions from the boy as “evidence” is just more Balderson-spin, plain and simple.

On top of this, while Balderson wants to reinforce a simple either/or narrative, that either Dearman is guilty/bad and Christie is innocent/good, or vice versa, there is no reason to suppose this. Both men might have been involved in abusing the children.

As a related point, towards the end of the boy’s last statement, the one in which he claims Christie made him tell the stories, he is asked if his father ever did anything bad to him. He says he didn’t and then he begins to recount a time when his father gave him money; before he tells the story, he interrupts himself by saying “This is actually the truth what happened!” It’s a spontaneous outburst that suggests, in the context, that the rest of what he is saying (i.e., that his father never did anything bad to him) might not be “actually the truth of what happened.”

A few minutes after that, he mentions the reason why his mother and father broke up: his father (Dearman) wanted to take the children *to a party and it was late at night*.

Strange reason for a couple to break up?

#### **4) Why Do You Smear The Father?**

Simple response: Smear implies innocence. If Dearman is guilty, is it a smear?

*First off, you do realize that a non-molestation order has nothing to do with child molesting right?*

Balderson's point is a mocking one, but in a statement made by Tatiana Wermuth in 2010 around the non-molestation order, she said, "I could describe Mr. Dearman's behavior as a textbook example of a physical and emotional abuser, who doesn't care the least about his children's well-being and mental health." Since this statement was made four years before the supposed "satanic panic" began, it's worth allowing into the discussion, and hardly a case of "smearing" to do so.

*Now I'm not going to pretend to know what happened in their household, but the father has never been charged or convicted of domestic violence against Ella Draper, and there are certainly women that abuse legal privileges like this during nasty breakups and custody disputes.*

Balderson is questioning how previous charges against Dearman that have nothing to do with child molestation are being used as arguments for the father's guilt. This is a fair point. He's showing a flaw in the argument of the "believers," one they could do to take note of. Yet is it an argument on which the case against Dearman depends? There are other arguments suggesting Dearman's lack of innocence, and focusing on one of the weaker ones by no means proves there aren't. It may show that some of the "believers" use faulty logic, but this can be applied to any "group"—as well as to Balderson.

*Not satisfied, believers have implied that the father's acting and nude modelling makes him suspicious, and that doing voice over work for a charity overseas means he's involved in international child trafficking.*

This is either sloppy or disingenuous; the evidence cited by some of the Hampstead Research team as being suggestive is more than simply charity overseas = child trafficking. Ties have been claimed between one of the churches named by the children in their original statement and an organization known for child trafficking.

*Ultimately none of it sticks.*

True, but this is only because Balderson has been careful to pick the least sticky examples.

### **5) Why Do You Ignore Abraham Christie's Record?**

Simple answer: Christie's record does become relevant once the second allegations appear, and should not be ignored. But it is very far from proof of anything.

*When the children where out of Christie's reach they told investigators he hit them with spoons, poured jugs of water over them, and carried out other cowardly acts of violence, until they stopped "lying." In his sick mind lying was anything that didn't fit the story he'd concocted for them.*

Balderson has no qualms about referring to Christie's "sick mind," even after criticizing the Hampstead "believers" for smearing Dearman. Evidently he has one standard for himself and another for everyone else. (Both children claimed that Dearman hit them on the head with spaghetti spoons if they screamed during the sex at school. Later they alleged that Christie hit them on the head with spoons.)

*Those who were unfortunate enough to have watched the original videos will have noticed the children's bruises, which were also noted in medical reports. Considering they hadn't seen their father for months at the time that they were medically examined, I wonder where those bruises came from?*

I could not see any bruises in the videos. There only wounds mentioned in the medical reports that might have been visible are those apparently inflicted on the children's ears, but I could not see any visible sign of these. Judge Pauffley (the Judge who acquitted Dearman and who accused anyone who believed the children's first allegations as "foolish and evil") also claims she saw bruises, so perhaps Balderson is trying to reinforce her claim with his own, and even assuring anyone who has been "unfortunate enough to have watched the original videos" that they saw the bruises too, even while implicitly discouraging them from going back for a second look?

## **6) What Medical Evidence?**

Simple response: is Balderson a medical professional?

*Believers like to cling on to the very first medical reports from Dr. Hodes, because she wrote that the evidence supports allegations of sexual abuse. However even if there was medical evidence of sexual abuse, it still wouldn't prove who the perpetrators were.*

Again we have an initial claim followed by a retraction. This is inconclusive, obviously. One can choose to believe the first report or the later retraction. If there is evidence elsewhere of a crime and or cover-up, it would seem sensible to allow for a cover-up around the medical evidence also.

*However it's disingenuous to focus on these initial reports because Hodes took her findings to a panel of colleagues to be peer reviewed. She then subsequently agreed that she had overstated the findings, and what was actually observed fell within "possible normal variant," meaning the children were comparable to children who were not abused.*

To any discerning intelligence, under the circumstances, this is at least as likely to signal a deliberate suppression of evidence as a genuine reevaluation.

*So let's think about this logically for a second. If a massive cult had been abusing these children every week for an extended period of time, you'd think the physical signs would be absolutely overwhelming. Not one possible sign, in one child, without other supporting signs, and which has also been observed in non-abused children.*

Even allowing for the reliability of the "reevaluated" medical evidence, Balderson is assuming too much authority about a subject that few people can claim to understand. A young child who is abused once, for example, may experience the abuse as recurring because of the damage done to them psychically, not just physically. If the children were even just witnessing abuse on a regular basis, this would be a form of retraumatization that could be psychically equivalent to continued physical abuse, and yet would not leave physical traces. This is just one explanation for the supposed inconsistency that Balderson's "logic" exposes.

*They should have been in constant pain, they should have been having nightmares, they should have been trying to stay off school in fear, and the evidence should be conclusive. It's not!*

That's a lot of "shoulds" from someone who appears to know little or nothing about how sexual trauma works and the effects of severe dissociation. Does he know for a fact that the children were not having nightmares? In the medical report it clearly states that they were. Has Balderson even read the report? Is he aware of how systemized sexual abuse is a means to render a child docile, dissociated, disconnected from their feelings, emotionally malleable, and easily controllable? If not, why not? If he is aware, why is he deliberately distorting the truth by asking such misleading questions?

*Put Up or Shut Up*

*If the truth is on your side you shouldn't have any trouble answering the above 6 questions and providing evidence for the satanic cult you believe so confidently in.*

Balderson ends on a note of aggressive challenge. It's curious how his tone is subtly indignant and morally superior, under the circumstances. It doesn't seem meant to invite a genuine dialogue or to express a desire to get to the truth. It appears more to be designed to intimidate anyone who dares to question his "unassailable logic."

Polarization would seem to be the name of the Balderson game. In which case, he has been highly effective.