

28 May 2009

David Southall

"A Very Dangerous Doctor"

**BBC Panorama swims with sharks.
GMT: 8.30 pm Monday June 1st 2009**

By Lisa Blakemore Brown, Psychologist



Speaker



Across Britain 28th Feb 2009

Distortion, Denial And Destruction

New Labour Legacy For Children With Disabilities And Their Families

Dr David Southall, Paediatrician, was struck off the Medical Register by the GMC (General Medical Council) in 2007. He appealed within the time limit and his case was heard in April 2009. On May 22nd 2009 Justice Blake upheld that GMC Decision and David Southall lost his Appeal in the High Court. (See [High Court Appeal Judgement](#), Mr. Justice Blake).

On Monday June 1st 2009, the BBC Panorama programme, normally balanced and respected, is to air a documentary on Dr Southall which it has been working on for over a year, presumably after the Appeal was put into place. (See '[A Very Dangerous Doctor](#)', BBC Panorama).

I hope Panorama will be fair and unbiased but I have every reason to believe this will not be the case. For this reason I am writing this article in the hope that it will go some way to alerting viewers about this possible bias and failure to do what Panorama's name suggests – take a wide view of the issues.

Distortions Of Thinking

As a Psychologist specialising in work with children, I can assure you that I would be the first to agree that the interests of the child must come first. They are our future and it is incumbent upon us to protect them. Therefore if distortions of thinking for whatever political reason have been allowed to interfere with common sense which put children and their families at risk and in danger, the British Government and professionals have a profound duty to expose these distortions to protect children and of course their families.

In my opinion Drs David Southall and Roy Meadow have brought distorted thinking into child protection on all levels through the theory of MSBP (Munchausen Syndrome By Proxy) which will forever be linked to their names. The negative influence their thinking and approach has had on child protection policy, Government Guidelines and training and wider professional influence in all spheres where children are involved, is immense. (See [The Consensus Report](#), Family Law Reform).

Catastrophic Collapsing Care System

Despite this influence and despite their admirers in high places including the Court system, children are still being killed and harmed by their parents, so called child protection teams are continuing to fail badly and rather than fewer children removed into care as we advance, astonishingly more are taken into care and there is much evidence that many are wrongly taken into our collapsing care system. I wrote about this in 1997 after my first experience with Dr Southall and MSBP in Court. (See [My Letter of Concern](#) published in The Psychologist, Journal of the British Psychological Society in September 1997).

Social worker vacancies are higher than they have ever been and no-one knows how to cope with the children wrongly taken as they are, wrongly regarding them as abused. The outcomes for children in care are actually worse than I reported back in that 1997 Letter to the Editor, poor educational qualifications and a much higher chance of ending up in prison. A recent Special Report described the system as “catastrophic”. (See [Distortion, Denial And Destruction](#), New Labour Legacy For Children With Disabilities And Their Families, Convention on Modern Liberty, Lisa Blakemore Brown).

We are facing a national disaster in child protection on every level and this was predictable when wrong headedness seeped into the system and theories such as Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy were allowed to reign and to snake like a cancer through the system.

This Government was told time and time again and not just by concerned professionals such as myself. Everyone ignored the warnings and the advice including Tony Blair, Jack Straw, Jacqui Smith, Frank Dobson, Alan Milburn, Margaret Hodge and Beverley Hughes to name a few. Yet if Professors Meadow and Southall had been right – and they have enjoyed a profound influence over more than a decade – then we would now be seeing the opposite of what we face.



Dr David Southall, condemned in the High Court

“Truly shocking” examples of harm done to individual cases by the unfounded allegations of Dr Southall may have led to him being finally struck off the medical

register, and losing his [Appeal in the High Court](#) but nowhere do I see a comprehensive balanced view of how he and similarly minded colleagues have enjoyed widespread political influence under this Government leading to appalling miscarriages of justice on a massive scale.

Political Influence, Miscarriages Of Justice

When Sir Roy Meadow faced intense criticism over his wrongful allegation of murder in the Sally Clark case, the then Attorney General, Lord Goldsmith announced that over 250 criminal cases would be opened to scrutiny. The then Children's Minister Margaret Hodge announced that family court cases would also be opened up and they may have to return 10,000 children wrongly taken into care. Oh what efforts must have gone on behind closed doors to cover that up because the upshot was that we heard very little about the criminal cases. Margaret Hodge was swiftly moved and after a Haringey style internal inquiry by Local Authorities, only one single case was "found" to be worrying. This in itself is ridiculous. (See [Cot death rulings 'may force return of adopted babies'](#), Daily Telegraph).

Of course there could not have been any scrutiny. A lesson from the Haringey Baby Peter case shows us exactly what we can expect when people are sent off to mark their own homework when they know they are profoundly wrong. (See ['We have to take responsibility'](#) Christine Gilbert tells Polly Curtis what Baby P means for Ofsted and social services in the Guardian).

Panorama Fails To Capture Big Picture

The distortions of thinking are still snaking through the system. Now Panorama itself has become embroiled and will claim that Dr Southall is in fact a victim of false allegations and has been subjected to a hate campaign.



The programme focus, garnered from my interviews with a Panorama researcher, appears to be on a trouble maker, Penny Mellor, and her influence on families and the regulatory bodies such as the GMC. Yet Panorama were not interested in the information I had on both this trouble maker and Dr Southall, having been an Expert Witness in a court case in which Dr Southall was involved back in 1996 and part of a New Zealand documentary on travesties of justice involving Dr Southall and also myself a victim of Penny Mellor's dirty tactics.

My 12 year long efforts to alert the Government to what was shocking to me about Drs Southall and Meadow and their cavalier allegations of murder and use of MSBP were of no interest to Panorama. Neither was the knowledge I had gleaned over that long period, nor the damage done to me by a system in denial, nor were the many

letters and contacts, articles and papers I have written over the long years since I too was truly shocked by the behaviour of David Southall and the distorted MSBP methodologies.

They were not interested in the first complaint I made to the GMC which they dismissed back in 1996, saying Dr Southall had a right to his opinion. That complaint included reference to another mother who he accused first of making up a story about a neighbour's baby who died, then, when it turned out to be true, of killing him, even though she had never seen the child until the desperate mother carried him lifeless around the neighbourhood.

That shocking information was also sent to the Department of Health and various Ministers, to no avail, yet it maps onto what Dr Southall also did to Stephen Clark, Sally's husband, and to Mrs M in the case which resulted in Dr Southall being struck off and goodness knows how many others.

Panorama were not interested in the tape of a phone conversation in which Penny Mellor desperately tried to warn a mother against making contact with me, saying she "got LBB struck off". She had put a blatantly libellous complaint into the British Psychological Society about me, but she did not "get me struck off" and I have never been "struck off" from the British Psychological Society, yet they listened to Penny Mellor despite all the evidence against her. .

The reason Panorama were not interested, I can only assume, is because I would appear to be saying the same thing as Penny Mellor about David Southall and this would complicate their story as we are clearly not on the same platform and I am most certainly not part of any hate campaign and never have been. The fact that in my opinion *both* individuals might be a problem is clearly not on their agenda.

Vaccine Programme Protection

Crucially, however, there is another little matter which Panorama most definitely do not want to look at - that protection of the vaccine programme may lie behind why both Roy Meadow and David Southall brought these distortions in to start with and why they are so well protected and influential.

The [evidence](#) showing that Sir Roy Meadow was on the Adverse Reactions to Vaccination sub committee of the JCVI (Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation) just at the time the MMR was brought in was of no interest to Panorama. Penny Mellor dismissed this FOI information and even defended Roy Meadow leading to many falsely accused mothers who began to wonder exactly what was her agenda. Nor was the fact that Dr Southall has been involved in vaccine trials research and strongly linked to the FSID (Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths) with many mothers wrongly accused of MSBP and/or murder after experiencing cot deaths in their children after vaccines. (See [What killed Sally Clark's child?](#) Neville Hodgkinson asks why the jury in the Sally Clark trial was told to discount the DTP jab given to her second child, Harry, just five hours before he was found dead. The Spectator 16th May 2007).

Nor was Panorama interested in the high incidence of MSBP allegations amongst families whose children suffered side effects from vaccinations such as Kawasaki Syndrome. Nor was it interested in the extraordinary fact that, oddly, the incidence of MSBP is much higher amongst those whose children suffer from Autism and ADHD, bowel disorders, seizures and allergies, especially anaphylaxis, ME and other conditions which many parents say developed after vaccine. The lives of so many have been blighted by false allegations literally adding insult to injury.

Nor was Panorama interested that Penny Mellor has done her best to shift the focus away from vaccines in all the cases she has involved herself in, nor that she set up a bank account when she suddenly appeared as a crusading “housewife” in late 1998 apparently on the side of those falsely accused of MSBP. Surely an investigative programme such as Panorama would be in a very strong position to find out more about that bank account and the background of her military father mentioned in John Batt’s book on Sally Clark. It might also get them a little bit closer to understanding why such a person does what she does. It may of course all be totally innocent, but Panorama certainly don’t want to risk it.

One lives in hope and I can only hope that the programme will be balanced, especially as it has seen the New Zealand documentary having contacted TV3 in Auckland, seen many emails from me and others, had meetings and seen various articles and letters I have written over the years. I will watch it with interest and provide more information once it has been aired.

Lisa Blakemore Brown, Psychologist
28 May 2009

You can contact Panorama at panorama.reply@bbc.co.uk

Related Links:

* [David Southall High Court Appeal Judgement](#)

High Court of Justice, Mr. Justice Blake

* [Distortion, Denial And Destruction](#)

New Labour Legacy For Children With Disabilities And Their Families
Convention on Modern Liberty, Lisa Blakemore Brown

* [The Consensus Report](#)

Family Law Reform
