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RADIO 4

TRANSCRIPT OF “FILE ON 4” – “THE ORPHANAGE BUSINESS”

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REPORTER:	Anna Cavell
PRODUCER:	Kate West
EDITOR:	Gail Champion

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#### ACTUALITY CAR DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING

CAVELL: It's a little bit after 10 on Friday morning and we're following the government officer and I think two or three police officers as well, on our way to Rock of Joy, and they're on their way to close it. I'm not quite sure how this is going to play out, because there are apparently young children in the building.

#### ACTUALITY OF MOTORBIKE HORN

CAVELL: It's late December and we're travelling through an area in South Western Uganda, close to Lake Victoria, called Masaka. We're here because we've been told the Government's planning to shut down an illegal orphanage. It's not clear who runs it and it goes by various different names, including Rock of Joy Children's Care and African Children's Education Society. The closure's part of a broader operation to try to get children out of institutions and into families. We are with the Government representative, who's a social worker, and apparently she gave the home notice to close, but they ignored it. The deadline to do so has passed and it's still open. So we're just driving down a red, dirt road on a completely normal looking residential street. You would never imagine there would be a babies' home down here.

#### ACTUALITY ASKING FOR DIRECTIONS, CHICKENS CLUCKING

CAVELL: We just got directions from a man selling chapatis, so hopefully this is going to be the right place. Clearly the Rock of Joy home is known in the neighbourhood, because that man seemed to be directing the policewoman to it. Oh, I think we might be here because the police are parking up, so shall we get out of the car? There's a child peeking out from behind a gate and he's looking pretty worried, so I think this could well be Rock of Joy.

#### ACTUALITY OF CAR DOORS CLOSING

CAVELL: I'm just going to talk to the police, see what's happening now. Okay, I think we're here, we're going inside.

#### ACTUALITY OF BIRDSONG

CAVELL: Apart from the birds, it's pretty much silent when we arrive - not how I'd imagined an orphanage would sound. It's also not how I expected the place to look. Pictures we'd seen online of a reputable charity with a similar name showed neat, presentable school buildings with brightly coloured walls. This is clearly a different place and a different organisation. The Government of Uganda estimates there are more than 500 unlicensed homes like this one operating illegally, and it wants to close them all. This one seems to receive funding from the UK, and we were told by the Government that conditions here are among the worst they've ever seen.

#### ACTUALITY OF GATE CREAKING OPEN

CAVELL: Some more children. I don't see any adults supervising and nobody's coming out, even though the police are here.

#### ACTUALITY OF COCKEREL CROWING

CAVELL: Okay, we're just going to follow the probation officer now as she goes inside to have a look around. I mean, the compound is pretty dirty. There's a bag of rubbish overflowing with food waste. There's some raggedy clothes on the line, chickens wandering around pecking and scratching. There's just an enormous axe lying around in the middle of the floor. Now we're following Maria, the Government social worker. She's going into the smaller building at the back. More and more children just keep appearing.

WOMAN: No! No offices for the home.

CAVELL: The Government describes these closures as raids, but this event is being kept calm to avoid scaring the children. It's just Maria from the Government and a couple of police officers. There are only about 25 children at the home, but only two adults who seem to work here. We're about to go inside with Maria and our translator, Prossy.

What do you think Maria, are the conditions very bad?

MARIA: They are bad. Like us, you have seen the standards - this is far below the standard of a home. First of all it needs to be approved by a Minister of Gender. They don't even have an approval certificate and you can't even approve them in this state. Do you want to see the toilets? Stinking.

CAVELL: Okay, wow, I can smell them, yeah. The floor looks like it's flooded, I'm going inside. They are just open pit latrines. I don't see any paper, I don't see anywhere to wash hands. The smell is very bad [door creaks]. It's filthy. I'm just going to try the taps in this bathroom as well. These also don't work. There's no running water in this building.

#### ACTUALITY OF POLICE SPEAKING TO CHILDREN

CAVELL: It seems that very few of these children are actually orphans - most of them have parents, and even the ones that don't, do have families. As soon as Maria arrived, she started ringing the parents on the phone, telling them to come and pick up their children, which most of them did.



#### ACTUALITY OF KIDS SHOUTING

CAVELL: Maria, the Government social worker, started trying to call the people responsible for the home.

#### ACTUALITY OF PHONE CALL

MARIA: .... Manager ... manager. Hello ... hello?

CAVELL: Well, it looks like the woman on the other end of the phone may have hung up now.

MARIA: Captain ... captain.

CAVELL: Who is the Captain?

WOMAN: Captain Barbara.

CAVELL: She's a director?

WOMAN: Yes.

MARIA: The director? Pat's the director.

CAVELL: Maria asked the two women working at the home who was responsible for it and they gave her some phone numbers. Three were for Ugandans, two of whom seemed to have military ranks. And another was for a man they called Uncle Pat, who, as a foreigner, is referred to in Uganda as a mzungu, meaning a white person. None of these people were available to talk to Maria.

#### ACTUALITY OF COCKEREL CROWING

CAVELL: Are you going to take them right now?

MARIA: I wanted to take them right now.

CAVELL: Is it ok if we follow you?

MARIA: It's okay.

CAVELL: There were a few children whose families Maria couldn't get hold of, so she decided to drive them home herself. There was one group of four girls who came from the same village about half an hour away. These children were clearly excited about the idea of going home for Christmas, and when they heard what was happening, they started stuffing their clothes into backpacks, plastic bags and any other receptacles they could find. They took everything with them - they took their drawings off the walls, the plastic cups and plates from the kitchen, even some of their bedding.

#### ACTUALITY OF CAR PULLING AWAY

CAVELL: We're deep in the village now. We've turned off the main road and we're bouncing down a dirt track, and it's a lot of farmland around here, so there's a wonderful sweet smell of coffee, which is in flower. There's maize growing in the fields, we've just passed a cow tethered to a tree. A very typical Ugandan scene. There are some ladies walking along here with some bags on their heads, children in various states of undress - some of them playing football. The grass is so high and so dense that it's brushing the sides of the car as we go past. We're going to get out of the car, I think we've arrived.

#### ACTUALITY OF CAR DOORS OPENING, CHILDREN'S VOICES

CAVELL: That's quite a sweet reunion. I think that looks like a sibling, who's carrying herself a baby and when she came round the corner of the house, all the other little girls rushed towards her. So this is a happy reunion; these people seem happy to see their family members back.

PROSSY: We are done. Lock the door, close the door properly.

CAVELL: We didn't hang around that long because of concerns about violence, apparently. Both the policewoman and the probation officer said that this old woman, who acts as an agent recruiting children to Rock of Joy, is known to be very violent and we had to leave because they were concerned that she might organise a gang of people to come and attack us. So that was why we had to leave in such a hurry.

#### ACTUALITY IN CAR

CAVELL: The following morning we went back to the home and the only people left were one of the members of staff with her four children. There were a couple of other kids there whose parents hadn't been able to pick them up the day before.

WADDINGTON: So this business works where people will decide to set up their own orphanage business, just a small orphanage in a community that might be on a tourist route, a tourist hotspot, or they might even have links to churches in the UK, Europe or the US.

CAVELL: Mark Waddington's the head of the UK charity, Hope and Homes for Children. They work with governments all over the world, including Uganda, to try to encourage alternatives to institutional care for children - things like foster care and adoption, rather than orphanages. He says in the 1990s there were fewer than two thousand children living in institutions in Uganda, but that now there's more 55,000. Mark Waddington says that what's driving the numbers up is the huge amounts of money being donated from countries like the UK. The money's given with good intentions, but what it can end up doing is turning children into commodities. In the worst cases, they're being used to generate income, which benefits the people who run the orphanages.

WADDINGTON: It's almost like accessing a global market where tourists and/or links to churches provide a chain and pathway through which funds can be generated and donated to support these orphanages. Professional child finders are actually recruited by some of these orphanage businesses to go into villages and persuade parents to give up their children, and of course these families are very vulnerable; they're living in significant poverty and with the consequences of that poverty. Now of course, there are some orphanages that are established for the right reasons, with good intent and run by good



LAETICIA [VIA INTERPRETER]: She told me that her friend, she looks after children in that home. I'll send her to you and they take some of the children.

CAVELL: The agent told Laeticia they'd pay for her children's education and that things like food and clothes would be provided. She wanted originally to send her older children, but the agent insisted on taking the younger ones. This did make Laeticia pause, but she didn't want to risk losing out on such a good opportunity.

LAETICIA [VIA INTERPRETER]: One time I wanted to go and see inside the dormitory where they sleep and the caretaker wouldn't let me. The second time I went to visit them, I found John, the young one, I found him crying. And when I was about to leave, he told me that I shouldn't leave him behind, because the lady who was taking care of them was beating them. So the babysitter kept on chasing him away from me, telling him that. 'You go away, you are finished to see your mum, go back, go back.' So I told her that I'm going back, but my heart is not happy.

CAVELL: She understood the orphanage was funded by donors from abroad, but it wasn't the wonderful opportunity she'd hoped it would be. We talked to the sons she'd removed from there after they'd returned home, while they were washing dishes for dinner.

Can you tell me in English how old you are?

JOHN: 9 years old.

CAVELL: Joseph, tell me, what was it like living at Rock of Joy?

JOSEPH [VIA INTERPRETER]: They were not treating us well.

CAVELL: What were they doing to you?

JOSEPH [VIA INTERPRETER]: They used to beat us, because John, he used to wet his beddings and he was forced to wash them. Whenever I tried to go and help him out, they







CAVELL: We wanted to find out more about Patrick Oldham and the orphanage he's been fundraising for. A quick search revealed that neither of the names he uses for the orphanage are registered with the Charity Commission in the UK. The illegal home we saw closed down was Rock of Joy Children's Care in Masaka, although we've sometimes seen it called the African Children's Education Society. It appeared to be funded by donors in the North West of England, but there seemed to be something odd going on. Because there's also a legitimate, registered charity called the Rock of Joy Trust, which is also funded by donors in the North West of England, and it supports children in Uganda. They even work in Masaka. It seemed to be a remarkable coincidence, so producer Kate West gave them a call to do some fact checking.

#### ACTUALITY OF PHONE CALL

WOMAN: Just tell me where it was. Was it in Masaka town?

WEST: Just outside.

WOMAN: Was it a school?

WEST: No.

WOMAN: That isn't us.

MAN: I need to fill you in on the missing bits. About nine months ago, I had an approach from somebody in the north saying ....

CAVELL: Kate's phone calls established that the registered Rock of Joy supports schools that provide for 1,100 children in both Masaka and Kampala. They also run a farm and other projects geared towards self-sufficiency and they've been working in the region since 2007. The treasurer of the registered Rock of Joy, Stephen Blair, told us an alarm bell went off for them last summer. They'd heard that someone was knocking on doors in England, using the name Rock of Joy to try to get people to donate.

CHRISTINE: An event - £1, £2, £3 tickets.

CAVELL: But they had another surprise when Kate contacted them. Stephen and his wife Christine, who's the Chairman, hadn't heard about a fundraising event in Manchester last March.

CHRISTINE: 100% from sales go to the Rock of Joy Children's Trust based in Uganda.

STEPHEN: It's got our website on the bottom.

CAVELL: Kate showed them adverts we'd found for a concert that was organised using their charity's website and logo, and Patrick Oldham was credited as being the founder.

CHRISTINE: [Gasps]

STEPHEN: And the logo.

CHRISTINE: Oh and our logo. Oh my goodness, that's awful. That is awful.

STEPHEN: I had no idea.

CHRISTINE: The events of Rock of Joy Foundation - we're the Rock of Joy Trust - based in Masaka, Uganda. Set up in early 2010 by the wonderful Patrick Oldham of Manchester, coincidentally. Oh my goodness.

STEPHEN: If you can't actually raise money in your own name for a good cause, then you must be doing something wrong, and that is very, very concerning.

CHRISTINE: It's fraud, isn't it? It's fraud, because that's absolutely nothing to do with us at all. And also looking at that advert for an event, he's got a number of bands involved. This is much bigger than we're ever able to do.

STEPHEN: The risk to us is huge, because if the Rock of Joy gets a bad name in the media, then any fundraising that we get will be harmed, and actually we need more money anyway. If funds fall, schools will close and that's my responsibility.

CAVELL: Patrick Oldham declined to answer our questions about whether he was using the identity of a registered charity to raise funds. Part of the problem, in the UK as well as Uganda, is that Oldham's organisation isn't registered, and because he's a volunteer operating informally, he isn't regulated by anyone, and therefore there's no oversight or accountability for what he does.

#### EXTRACT FROM BBC NEWS

REPORTER: In public, a respected pilot and charity volunteer, here describing the projects he helped:

WOOD: This is where it all began for me, nine years ago, when I started coming through British Airways to assist with the AIDS orphanage.

REPORTER: But behind the façade ....

CAVELL: On 19th April, 2013, Simon Wood, a pilot for British Airways, stepped off a plane at Heathrow Airport and was met in the car park by officers from the Metropolitan Police. Several months later, he was charged with the indecent assault of a child and for making and possessing indecent images of children. He never stood trial, as he took his own life. And it wasn't until after his death that the extent of his abuse of children in Africa became known.

READ: Simon Sood was a British Airways pilot. He'd spend a lot of time at schools and orphanages which, during his time there, he accessed and groomed a large number of young children, then he began sexually abusing them, and in many cases he would rape them.

CAVELL: Rebekah Read is a solicitor for the law firm, Leigh Day. She specialises in bringing claims on behalf of children abused overseas by British men. She represented Wood's victims in a case against British Airways. She explained how Simon Wood's work with orphanages and schools in Africa allowed him to access vulnerable children.

READ: He'd start by volunteering his time, and after a while he would often take the children swimming or take them on trips to the beach or the zoo, and gradually he would take them on these trips unaccompanied. During those trips he would groom them and start to sexually abuse them.

#### ACTUALITY OF RAINFALL

SUZANNA: What I liked about the school, I was an entertainer. I was a dancer [laughs] so whenever all the sponsors would come, I used to dance, play games, yeah.

CAVELL: This young woman, who we're calling Suzanna, was just 7 years old when Simon Wood found her at her school in Uganda. He and other foreigners would visit the children at their boarding school.

SUZANNA: Yeah, they used to buy me sweets and I used to like that.

CAVELL: Who used to buy you sweets?

SUZANNA: The sponsors. After entertaining them, they'd just say, hey, we really liked the entertainment, can I take her out for ice-cream, can I take her out for this?

CAVELL: Suzanna wasn't an orphan, but her education was being supported by a UK charity called Hope for Children. Based in Hemel Hempstead, the charity has projects all over the world. British Airways was a sponsor and Simon Wood was their



CAVELL: Suzanna was part of the Hope for Children sponsorship programme. They don't work in or run schools, and they say that the establishments they support are required to have adequate safeguarding processes in place, but in internal emails seen by the BBC, Hope for Children is very clear they have a duty of care over any children that are sponsored through them.

#### EXTRACT FROM PROMO VIDEO

PRESENTER: By improving their access to education and healthcare, we are helping to instil a sense of confidence and self-belief that will empower the most vulnerable children to believe that they can look forward to achieving a brighter future.

CAVELL: We've seen emails that show Simon Wood was actively involved in fundraising for Hope for Children and was in regular contact with staff in both the UK and East Africa. However, Hope for Children say he was never a representative of the charity or an employee, and that he had no involvement in its running. But he had set up an orphanage in Kenya called Kidzone, which was funded through an arrangement with Hope for Children. These internal emails between him and the charity's management show just how closely they were involved with each other. They liaised over decisions related to the Kidzone project on issues like spending, staffing and fundraising. He was also a regular visitor to these projects, and to the children supported by them. Lawyer Rebekah Read says this was the reason he deliberately chose charitable work in schools and orphanages in places like Uganda and Kenya.

READ: He quickly found out, when he started to contact young children through orphanages and schools, that the access that he was able to get in these often very poor countries, was far in excess of what he would get away with in the UK, and so I think that he quite deliberately volunteered in orphanages and schools, and became often quite embedded, and gained the trust of those who were running the schools or orphanages and then gradually would groom the children, and that would lead to the horrendous abuse.

CAVELL: What was revealed about Simon Wood's activities in the aftermath of his death led to him being dubbed one of Britain's most prolific sex offenders.

## MUSIC

CAVELL: He had been arrested and questioned in England in the year 2000 on charges of child abuse. Hope for Children said that they had no knowledge of this until after his death 13 years later and that they'd done a full CRB check on him in 2010, which had come back clear. According to documents filed as part of the case against British Airways, multiple accusations of abuse had been made about Simon Wood long before his eventual arrest. There were at least four previous instances where there were claims of abuse by Wood at Hope for Children supported projects in Kenya and Uganda.

READER IN STUDIO: 2008 - child abuse was reported by a mother to staff at the Kidzone orphanage in Kenya.

READER 2 IN STUDIO: 2009 - notes from a staff meeting record rumours of child abuse by Simon Wood, again at Kidzone. The notes include instructions that Wood should not be alone with children.

READER 3 IN STUDIO: 2010 - Kidzone, a member of staff saw Simon Wood sexually assaulting a child and reported it to the orphanage management.

READER 4 IN STUDIO: In Uganda, an adult at the school attended by our interviewee, Suzanna, reported seeing Simon Wood abusing two girls to school staff.

CAVELL: There were at least 17 victims of Simon Wood who were compensated by BA at the Kidzone orphanage in Kenya. A further fourteen were compensated at Suzanna's school, along with one child living at a babies' home. Many of these victims were represented by Rebekah Read from Leigh Day in their claim against British Airways.

READ: Perhaps in the Simon Wood case, if at the first point that a suspicion was made, if a thorough investigation had taken place, perhaps he would have been stopped in the earlier years, which is a really hard thing to acknowledge, but I suppose it stresses the importance of NGOs or schools or orphanages really being very thorough and objective in their investigations.

CAVELL: In a statement, Hope for Children told us they were unaware of previous allegations until his arrest in 2013. They said they'd never received any disclosure or report from a sponsored child that they were abused by Simon Wood, including the victim we've spoken to. If they had, they say would have taken action to protect them from harm. After Simon Wood's death, they told us they fully supported the police investigation into his activities, and made counselling services available to affected children in Kenya. They also carried out an internal investigation, but repeated that no one supported by them in Uganda disclosed having been abused by Simon Wood. They also said they made a serious incident report to the Charity Commission, however the regulator told us Hope for Children didn't do this until 2018 - five years after the allegations came to light. British Airways made payments in settlement of claims to a total of 38 victims of Simon Wood, including Suzanna – albeit without an admission of liability. In a statement they said:

READER IN STUDIO: As soon as the airline was made aware of these claims in 2013, we called in the police to ensure that the children would be protected. We do not underestimate the impact these appalling acts have on the children involved, and although we do not bear any legal responsibility for his actions, we have agreed a means of supporting and helping them. British Airways does not sanction employees visiting its sponsored international charity projects outside four organised and escorted trips a year.

CAVELL: Many organisations are coming around to the idea that allowing people to volunteer with vulnerable children presents huge risks. But for Suzanna, this realisation's too late. She is likely to live with the mental and physical consequences of abuse for the rest of her life.

SUZANNA: All the things Simon used to do, I didn't know they would affect me in future and I didn't know it would cause such a serious problem to me.

CAVELL: There is now an impetus to change things in Uganda, and the closure of institutions for children is high on the agenda. Although the closure of illegal homes is going to be a long and difficult process, Mark Waddington's hopeful that this marks a new era - the beginning of the end of institutional care.

WADDINGTON: We will begin to see a reduction in the amount of support of the orphanage economy in countries like Uganda, a reduction in the number of tourists turning up, and the abuse of children in that orphanage economy, and eventually see the reform in a way that all children are growing up in, in loving, safe families.

#### ACTUALITY OF WASHING

CAVELL: Back in Laetitia's village, it's washing day - a huge task for this family of seven. Life isn't easy, but she's got her children back. Thanks to the support of charities of a different kind – the ones that work to keep families together and support them at home rather than separate them. Her children now all live at home and attend the local school and she's been supported to start a small business of her own in the hope that one day she won't have to depend on donations.

LAETICIA [VIA INTERPRETER]: I continue to go to the gardens to look for, to work in people's gardens. I get some little money. And the social workers also have been contributing some little money to help me with the school fees. I'm very grateful because I want to live with my children.

CAVELL: But her views on funding orphanages of the sort she's experienced are clear, as is her message to the UK.

LAETICIA [VIA INTERPRETER]: I would like to tell the donors that your money, the money you send, doesn't do the intended work, and I want to stay with my children and I don't want to ever give them away.

#### ACTUALITY OF CAR HORN BEEPING

CAVELL: Bye.

BOYS: Bye. Bye bye.