

## [Transcript] Faith on Trial: Hillsong / The Verdict

Honourable Members, the Deputy Speaker.

We'll call our first speaker, it's the Member for Clark.

Thank you Deputy Speaker.

Deputy Speaker, last year a whistleblower provided me with financial records and board papers that show Hillsong is breaking numerous laws in Australia and around the world relating to fraud, money laundering and tax evasion.

This is Andrew Wilkie, an Australian politician who knows a fair bit about being a whistleblower. He was one himself.

He became famous for blowing the whistle in the baseless claims for the Iraq War.

There just weren't any weapons of mass destruction.

Now he's putting the spotlight on Hillsong.

This document shows how in 2021 four members of the Houston family and their friends enjoyed a three-day luxury retreat in Cancun, Mexico using \$150,000 of church money.

And these documents show former leader Brian Houston treating private jets like Ubers again or with church money.

In a five-minute speech, he turns Hillsong's world upside down.

Document after document, he exposes the church's secrets.

Meanwhile, the new head of Hillsong, Phil Dooley, has told church followers he only flies economy.

But these documents show him clocking up \$58,000 in business class flights for him and his daughter, the Guatemala.

Business class flights on church money, excessive spending.

Hillsong is left scrambling to defend itself as Andrew systematically reveals how the church uses his members' money.

If you speak up, Hillsong followers believe that the money they put in the poor box goes to the poor.

But these documents show how that money is actually used to do the kind of shopping that would embarrass a Kardashian.

For example, a \$6,500 Cartier watch for Bobby Houston, \$2,500 in Louis Vuitton luggage,

a \$2,500 watch for Phil Dooley, two watches worth \$15,000 for Joel and Julia Abel,

shopping sprees for designer clothes at Saks Fifth Avenue, and even \$16,000 for custom skateboards.

It's not just jewelry. Hillsong also hands out cash.

\$15,000 for Darren Kido's 50th birthday, \$36,000 for Gary Clark's 30th anniversary

and \$4,300 for his 60th birthday, plus up to \$30,000 to board members,

some of whom allegedly helped cover up the sexual abuse carried out by Frank Houston, Brian Houston's father.

These are serious claims. Brian Houston is currently on trial,

charged with allegedly concealing that sexual abuse committed by his own father.

The case is still ongoing. He's pleaded not guilty in Sydney's Downing Centre local court.

He has said he will strenuously fight the charges.

I was the only journalist in the room when Andrew made that speech, but I wasn't the only one who covered it.

Now breaking news out of Canberra this afternoon,

independent MP Andrew Wilkie has accused...

Andrew Wilkie has made sensational claims against a Hillsong church.

Under the protection of parliamentary privilege,

## [Transcript] Faith on Trial: Hillsong / The Verdict

the independent MP detailed financial crimes allegedly committed by Hillsong. At the same time as those news reports, this podcast has been getting reaction. Hillsong has been referred to the police over allegations being revealed about how students are taught to submit to their husbands. The Australian Skills Quality Authority is investigating claims Hillsong College interrogated students about their sex lives. The Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission has also said it's investigating the church, and then Hillsong has announced an internal review into its finances. As well as handing over the lease of Melbourne's Festival Hall, where it went to a Hillsong service only weeks ago, after claims it misused millions of tax-deductible donations to buy the venue. As all of these investigations creep into motion, every day, Brian Houston's own trial on the unrelated charge that he allegedly concealed his father's child sex abuse just keeps getting closer. This is Faith on Trial, Episode 8, The Verdict. I know what it's like to be opposed and to be persecuted and to be lied about and to come under incredible demonic attack. I know, I've got a PhD in opposition. So I'm standing before you today after what has been another difficult week. Years ahead, we might look back on this week as Charles Dickens puts it. It was the best of times, and it was the worst of times. It was this season of light, and it was this season of darkness. That's Hillsong board member Stephen Crouch. Speaking at one of the church's services, on the Sunday morning, after those financial documents were released in Parliament. So there's going to be a different kind of message today, guys. And my hope is that we will resume normal church services as soon as we can. This is Phil Dooley, who took over the church after Brian Houston quit. That was only a year ago. Phil still looks like a surfer, tan, long, curly hair,

## [Transcript] Faith on Trial: Hillsong / The Verdict

but he doesn't look nearly as relaxed  
as he did a year ago.  
If anyone recalls this time in March last year,  
it was a tough week and a tough time.  
I had to get up and stand before you  
regarding other difficult and painful things.  
And here we are again in March,  
dealing with some very serious and confronting allegations.  
Phil, who's been in Hillsong for decades,  
apologizes to his church members.  
I want to start by saying I'm sorry.  
I'm sorry that as your pastor,  
you have to go through this  
and your kids have to go through this.  
Watching him, I'm thinking,  
what about apologizing to the people  
I've spoken to for this podcast?  
The women who've been sexually harassed  
or fined for having sex  
or told they couldn't work with children?  
Some of you have been ridiculed, abused,  
maybe even vilified.  
And I'm sorry you felt betrayed by information  
you've read in the media this week.  
Phil complains that Andrew Wilkie used parliamentary privilege  
to drop the documents.  
And what that means in practice  
is that no one can be sued for defamation  
when reporting on what's in the documents.  
Phil says that Andrew should have gone to the church  
for a response and asked for an explanation.  
But I've been doing that for months now  
and I've only got one email back  
saying that the church was working on a response.  
It kind of feels like being king hit from behind.  
But Jesus loves you, Mr. Wilkie.  
The document dropped might have been a king hit.  
But the hits keep coming.  
Journalists are swarming on the documents.  
I start looking through them.  
I find \$8,000 spent at Disneyland.  
\$2,400 spent at Nobu,  
Robert De Niro's restaurant in Newport Beach in California.  
The documents show how Hillsong spends millions of dollars.

## [Transcript] Faith on Trial: Hillsong / The Verdict

But they also show where Hillsong's revenue comes from. One of those, well, I'll let you be the judge.

Hillsong charges \$1 million to Compassion International for promotion at its conferences.

That money could have been spent on food and medicine for kids living in extreme poverty.

The documents also reveal how Hillsong musicians share in about \$1 million of revenue in royalties every year.

Concerningly, the documents also show that Hillsong hid \$80 million a year from the Australian tax office.

In any organization, the way financial decisions are made is based on a certain structure and culture.

Our structure and culture is changing and needs to change to ensure we are held to a higher level of accountability.

And I welcome that.

I can't change the past, but I can play a significant role in changing the future.

For Phil, this is personal.

The documents also show he spent more than \$100,000 on business class flights, including for his daughter.

My travel schedule is approved by members of our board.

If I travel internationally, I travel business class simply because I'm going somewhere to work and I have limited time.

Phil also says that he paid a contribution towards the cost of those tickets.

And he speaks at length about the good works Hillsong does in other countries.

Finally, Phil responds to some of the allegations made by the women we've spoken to for this podcast.

Recently, we were even accused of having a rape culture.

That's pretty horrible to say.

As a senior pastor of Hillsong, I want all women to feel safe in our church.

And we strongly advocate against violence against women and children.

We advocate for you.

I have two daughters, and of course,

I would not want them to be part of a place with this kind of culture.

It's simply not who we are.

Many of the women I spoke to

went to Hillsong College in Sydney.

Phil says over 14,000 students have gone through there.

## [Transcript] Faith on Trial: Hillsong / The Verdict

And the huge majority of them have loved the experience.  
And many are serving God in ministry roles  
all over the world today.  
A small number have on occasion made complaints  
as happens in any institution.  
And when this has happened,  
we have listened and sought to understand.  
Even using outside investigators seeking their recommendations  
and making necessary changes  
to ensure the health and well-being  
of all the students who attend.  
After Phil's sermon,  
I get a few texts from former Hillsong College students.  
Most of those who got in touch haven't gone on tape.  
They're too scared or maybe too hurt.  
But what they say is important.  
I was just starting to calm down  
and then Phil opened his mouth this morning.  
One text read.  
There's another text that says...  
Honestly, if they can afford to pay 15K in skateboards,  
they can afford to pay us back the college fees we paid.  
And then I get another text.  
It's describing Phil's sermon.  
And it says...  
It was absolute bullshit.  
Someone else who responds to the scandal  
is Brian Houston, the Big Eagle,  
who founded Hillsong College.  
Unlike the women who contact me,  
the Big Eagle goes public on Twitter.  
I asked this podcast producer,  
Andrea T. Sevansson,  
to read out what Brian said.  
He said...  
I asked this podcast producer,  
Andrea T. Sevansson,  
to read out what Brian said.  
Clearly, Andrew Wilkie MP has used parliamentary privilege  
to espouse unproven and spurious claims about Hillsong Church,  
that are in the main either out of context,  
misleading or false.  
As global senior pastor,  
my focus was on the all-important ministry aspects

## [Transcript] Faith on Trial: Hillsong / The Verdict

of our endeavors at Hillsong Church.  
And I neither had nor wanted any access  
to the church's finances.  
The management of all budgets, spending and expenditure,  
is entrusted by the board to the general manager  
George Agagianian, with his administrative team.  
And he is accountable to the board  
to oversee all financial matters appropriately.  
But the headlines don't stop.  
The documents released in Parliament  
detailed a \$150,000 trip to Cancun, Mexico,  
while Sydney was in lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic.  
Brian, his wife, Bobby, and their sons,  
Joel and Ben, were there, according to the documents.  
It is absolutely false that the Houston family  
had a holiday in Mexico financed by Hillsong Church.  
The facts are that there was a global strategy meeting  
in Mexico, which involved senior team members  
from South America, USA, Europe, Australia, and South Africa.  
The meetings we had were held in a boardroom each day,  
and a lot was accomplished.  
Every person who attended was there  
in their official roles at the church.  
God, he's really getting defensive here.  
A day later, Brian was on the tweet again.  
This time, denying his wife, Bobby,  
was given an expensive watch on church money.  
Bobby has neither bought, owned,  
or worn a cardier watch in the last 25 years.  
It's just another lie told under parliamentary privilege.  
She never has and never would buy a watch for herself  
with church finances, yet another falsehood.  
Well, Brian, the documents actually list Bobby's name  
next to a \$6,500 cardier watch, so...  
I'm not sure where Brian is in the world  
when he's sending these tweets.  
Quite likely, he's no longer in Sydney,  
where he founded Hillsong in an old warehouse  
as an offshoot of his father's own Pentecostal church.  
Brian's just sold a house in Sydney's northwest  
that was listed for \$4.5 million.  
But he does pop up in Long Island, New York,  
just as I'm working on this last episode.  
He's speaking at church unleashed.

## [Transcript] Faith on Trial: Hillsong / The Verdict

A Pentecostal church modelled on Hillsong.  
And he defends himself in his sermon.  
This is just after Andrew tabled those documents in Parliament,  
accusing Hillsong of fraud and money laundering.  
And just after the church is accused of having a rape culture  
and of forcing women to submit to their husbands.  
This is what Brian says.  
No one likes opposition.  
I've got a PhD in opposition.  
I mean, I know what it's like to be opposed and to be persecuted  
and to be lied about and to come under incredible demonic attack.  
I know. But the anointing breaks the yoke.  
And the devil can't steal.  
The anointing. On your life he can't.  
So that's how Brian handles opposition.  
He says it's because God has anointed him.  
The anointing will be opposed.  
Why? Because it does make you dangerous.  
It does turn you into a different person.  
You're still the same person.  
You're still the same person.  
But you're living and operating in an entirely different way.  
Brian takes his new congregation on a tour of his life  
back to when he was a young pastor.  
As a youth camp speaker decades ago,  
I remember being at a particular youth camp in New South Wales and Australia  
and these young people, they were hard.  
I mean, they were talking and laughing while I'm trying to speak.  
And they were unruly.  
I remember thinking, what am I going to do?  
Because my flesh wanted to go down and punch them in the face.  
I'm finding the laughs at Brian wanting to punch teenagers in the face  
a bit unnerving.  
Why is that funny?  
Brian also mentions his father, Frank Houston, a serial pedophile.  
When I started preaching, it was obviously a while ago now,  
I used to get so nervous.  
I was a son of a prominent pastor,  
probably the most prominent pastor in our part of the world.  
You can get proud.  
You can think this is all about me.  
We passed at a church that while it was and is global, international,  
it did reach tens or more millions of people through the worship.  
And so are millions and millions of people.

## [Transcript] Faith on Trial: Hillsong / The Verdict

But one thing I do know, that that was well beyond me.  
I wasn't capable of building a church like that.  
It was the Holy Spirit.  
The Holy Spirit's anointed, but His anointing makes you look good.  
So then we started wanting to take the credit.  
We want to start taking the glory for ourselves.  
As I'm working on this episode, there's more breaking news.  
So Brian's just got done project driving.  
Brian Houston has just got done for drink driving.  
So I called his lawyer at 7am this morning.  
By 8am, he put out a post on Instagram saying,  
I've been done for drink driving.  
If he's there.  
What do you call the lawyer? How did you find her?  
So there was a tip last night, I got an email from somebody saying,  
here's this, and they had some documents, but it was just like a website.  
And I'm like, what if it said Brian Houston, but my goodness,  
what if there's two Brian Houston's?  
I'm going to check.  
So I rang the Orange County of the Newport Beach Police  
around the Newport Beach Council Public Relations Office.  
And then I found the DA's office.  
I went to them and they didn't answer.  
But then I phoned up the defense lawyer and he answered the phone.  
And yeah, he was on the road and literally within an hour, it was up.  
We at Crimex know that everyone's obsessed with true crime podcasts.  
But why?  
They tell the stories that we often never hear.  
Because it makes me feel like I could solve a crime.  
Because I want to understand the incomprehensible.  
There's just something so therapeutic about a gruesome murder  
because I need to know what the bad guys are up to.  
Once you start, you just can't stop.  
Well, don't panic. We hear you.  
Here on Crimex, we have exactly what you need.  
Hours and hours of crime content.  
Become a Crimex Plus subscriber for early, exclusive and ad-free content.  
Head to Crimex Plus on Apple Podcast today.  
Crimex Plus, the home of true crime.  
So here's Andrea, reading out that Instagram post from Brian.  
Here's what he wrote,  
In February 2022 and in the lead-up to my departure from the role of senior pastor of Hillsong  
Church,  
I was unfortunately charged with driving under the influence of alcohol in the USA.



## [Transcript] Faith on Trial: Hillsong / The Verdict

I made the foolish decision to drive just two or three hundred meters to park the car.  
At the time, it seemed like all hell had broken loose within Hillsong Church.  
And I was under immense pressure and emotional strain.  
Clearly, that's not an excuse and I take full responsibility for my actions.  
Okay, try to be brave.  
You'll have so much to save.  
Take control of your own life.  
Right now, every mistake  
Makes you feel like a fake.  
Take control of your own life.  
So right now, Brian is in America.  
But his time stateside will have to come to an end soon.  
He's due back in court in Sydney in June 2023  
for final submissions in the court case,  
where he's charged with concealing child sex crimes committed by his father.  
That issue is something we've been carefully treading around for this whole podcast.  
It's completely separate to everything you've heard about financial documents and Hillsong College.  
But it is important.  
How did the multi-million dollar home-owning, international jet setting,  
Cartier Watch not owning, head of the global phenomenon,  
that is Hillsong end up on trial in a Sydney courtroom?  
Well, that's not a new story.  
In fact, it starts in 1970.  
My name's Brett Sandstock.  
I appeared at the Royal Commission as AHA.  
That was my pseudonym.  
And now I stand before you with who I really am.  
This is Brett, interviewed on the 60 Minutes TV program.  
To do so, he waived his right to anonymity as a victim of child sex abuse.  
Brett gave evidence in court in Brian Houston's trial in Sydney just before Christmas 2022.  
The court heard that Brett was sexually abused by Frank Houston, Brian's dad,  
in Kudgy, a beachside suburb of Sydney, in 1970.  
Frank was staying at Brett's parents' house.  
Brian Houston's lawyers accepted as fact that the abuse did happen.  
The court also heard Brett received a \$10,000 payment, which he believed was in return for his  
silence.  
The issue now is what Brian Houston knew and what he did or didn't do about it.  
Brian's on trial for allegedly not reporting his dad's abuse to police.  
Do you still have a valid excuse for not telling authorities about your dad's pedophilia?  
Mr. Houston, who organised mad dog-to-gunk as a victim?  
What about Barbara Taylor's nates?  
Every morning, Brian would walk into the courthouse and take a seat inside the tiny courtroom.  
Andrea, you were sitting just a few metres away from him and his family. What was that like?  
Yeah, I was. I was expecting, as you said, it was a tiny courtroom.

## [Transcript] Faith on Trial: Hillsong / The Verdict

It was like massive courtroom. I was going to sit on the gallery.  
I was going to be separated from Brian and his family and everyone.  
But it was a really small room. It only seated 13 people inside the room itself.  
There were like two rows on each side of the room.  
And I got there quite early on the Monday of the first day of the trial.  
And I just grabbed a seat on the left side, on the front row of the left side of the room.  
And I actually ended up sitting on the Houston side of the room.  
So when Brian and Bobby arrived a bit later, they all grabbed a seat right behind me.  
And Frank's brother was actually right behind me.  
So the whole time I could see Brian in the corner of my eye.  
So, like, I don't know, it's hard, but can you give us a summary of the first couple of days of evidence?

What did you hear in court?

The first things we heard was the claims about Frank Houston.  
He died in 2004 and about how he was abusing boys when he was in New Zealand.  
So Frank was in Australia in 1970. He was on a trip from New Zealand.  
So he'd set up a church there. It was a Bible college and Brian was one of its graduates.  
And it was almost like a blueprint for Hillsong College in Sydney.  
And so Brian found out about his dad's sex crimes in 1999.  
And when we were all sitting in this tiny courtroom, we heard the audio of him preaching right after he found out.  
My own father, who I love, incidentally, while he was still a pastor in New Zealand, 30 years ago, or more, around there, had conducted himself in a manner that was predatory and that involved victims.  
And I'll be honest with you, at that moment, personally, it was like twin jets, or jets, excuse me, flying into the twin towers.  
That's why I could best describe the impact that's had on me on the inside.  
So Stephen, for context, Brian is saying this in 2002.  
So that's a year after 9-11 when the World Trade Center was attacked in New York by terrorists.  
And the crux of the case is all about if Brian had reasonable excuse to not report his dad's sex crimes to the police.

And one of the things that Brian's defense team was saying was that he was not the only one who knew about Frank Houston at the time.  
They were claiming there were thousands of other people who knew within Hillsong.  
And they said some of those members of Hillsong who knew about Frank Houston's sex crimes were actually members of the police force themselves.  
So that was kind of one of their defenses saying they knew about it and they didn't do anything about it.  
So is he trying to say, well, why am I being picked out for this crime when other people could be accused of the same thing?  
Yeah, they were basically saying, like, if tens of thousands of people knew about this, why is Brian being singled out right now for not saying anything?  
And Brian's defense as well for not saying anything to the police was that he alleges that Brett told him he didn't want to go to the police.

## [Transcript] Faith on Trial: Hillsong / The Verdict

And he was saying as he was testifying in court that at the time he found out Brett was an adult and he didn't want to go against Brett's wishes.

But then when Brett came up and testified, he was saying that he was paid \$10,000 allegedly for his silence.

So he says that this deal, this \$10,000 deal was signed on a McDonald's napkin.

So I wasn't allowed to record anything that day. You can't record court proceedings in Australia.

So Stephen, I'll get you to read out what Brett said when he was on the witness stand.

He said, I agreed to forgive his father, to comply with his wishes.

And he turned around and said, do you know this is all your fault? I didn't say anything.

Then he said, you tempted my father. At that stage, I was really moved by it.

I was deeply hurt because I'd known the man. I was shocked.

You tempted my father. So that's what we heard in court.

It's a really shocking claim and everyone kind of froze when it was said.

Brett was only seven years old when he was abused by Frank Houston.

So it's a horrific thing for someone to say about a victim,

basically blaming them for the abuse that they endured when they were seven years old.

That's a child.

So Brian, he defended himself on the witness stand and said that he had never said those words.

Brian said, it's nonsense. Who would say that about a seven year old boy?

It's just an absurd notion. So that's what the court heard.

There was more to Brian's testimony.

He denied that he didn't go to police because he wanted to protect the reputation of Hillsong.

He also denied that he put the church ahead of Brett's welfare.

On the witness stand, Brian said, I tried to protect more than the church,

to protect Brett, to protect all the parties, myself and I guess the church.

I knew I had no option but to talk to church authorities.

I believe Brett's wishes should be respected when it came to the police.

The case is going to be decided by a magistrate, not a jury.

The magistrate is a man called Gareth Christoffey.

He's sitting up front of the court facing Brian and the lawyers and he gets to ask questions.

He wants to know in what sense Brian had no option.

And Brian's reply is to say, quote, my intention was to never ever be guilty of a cover up.

So the magistrate didn't seem to be satisfied with that at all.

And he asked Brian, did you ever say to Brett in these conversations,

if you want to go to the police the church will support you.

Brian tries his best to explain.

He tells the court, I don't remember using those words,

but I certainly did not in any way try to inhibit his ability to go to the police.

The magistrate kept pushing and he said, did you believe Brett wanted the matter to remain confidential?

Brian said in response that Brett didn't want to lose more power or control on his own life.

The court heard Brian found out about his father's sex crimes in 1999.

A pastor called Kevin Maddog Mudford first heard about the claim.

Yes, he's actually called Maddog.

## [Transcript] Faith on Trial: Hillsong / The Verdict

He grew up on the wrong side of the tracks in New Zealand before he found God. Maddog told Hillsong's general manager, George Agagianian, we heard in court. Frank was stripped of his ministry. And shortly after, his Sydney Christian Life Center merged with Brian's Hills Christian Life Center. And together they formed Hillsong. The court heard other details about Frank's life. Brian's speaking in court more than 20 years after he first heard about the abuse of Brett. Since then, Brian told the court, quote, there's an allegation about Frank from much earlier when I was a young boy. In a boy's home he worked in as a Salvation Army officer. I have no doubt now my father was a serial pedophile and will probably never know the extent of it. That was a big moment in the court. We heard that Frank was a serial pedophile and the man saying that is his son, Brian Houston, the religious rock star. Then the magistrate asked Brian whether he thought people should know about his father's offendings. When it came out, Frank was quite old. The church gave him a financial payout. Brian said he didn't think his dad was still a danger because of his age and his health. Frank Houston was 79 when his son moved him on from Hillsong. He was sent to another church in New South Wales. Frank wasn't supposed to preach, but he did. In court we heard from the church pastor who gave him that platform, Bob Cotton. He said he didn't know Frank was a pedophile. He says if he did, he would never have let him near a microphone. But Frank did get near a microphone. In fact, there's some audio of him speaking just a couple of months before he died. He's an old guy, loves his suit, has that wispy hair, large forehead. He says he doesn't dye his hair, which is kind of a weird thing to point out in a sermon. He also makes a reference to young men and their appearances. But what a fantastic young fellow he is, curly hair, sort of, good looking. And it's not your fault you're good looking. So thank God you are. Who wants to be ugly when you can be good looking? That tape was played out in the court case. To be clear, that's Frank Houston, a self-confessed pedophile preaching at a church in Maitland, New South Wales. It's five years after he told his son Brian he had abused Brett Sengstock. But there's more to that sermon, which is available on YouTube. Look at this great big strong man, full of faith. I hope you love God all the days of your life. Follow the Holy Ghost and be a man of God. You may preach the gospel one day. And then you have the great ability to preach the gospel

## [Transcript] Faith on Trial: Hillsong / The Verdict

and the best pill there ever was, the gospel.

Yes.

At this point, Frank is just months away from death.

But you can hear that fire that drew so many people in.

And it's the same Holy Fire I've seen in Frank's son, Brian, when he is preaching.

It's the same fire that burnt so brightly inside Hillsong,  
as it spread out from Sydney right across the planet.

On stage, Frank is a man of God.

He says he can heal people.

He singles out one woman who says she's in pain.

Thank you for the power of God.

Lord, in the name of Jesus, I rebuke this condition.

Command the healing power of God to flow in Jesus' name.

Receive it now into your heart.

Jesus, heal her.

Heal her now in Jesus' name.

Yes.

There you go.

Put your hand on your knees.

Jesus, command these knees to be healed.

In the name of Jesus.

Good God.

Watch what's going on.

And I release the need to know.

With a broken heart and mind and arms laid down.

You're a warring hate and arms left in the light of day.

And let Jesus show the way.

But hey, I'm not the legius in an old sense.

I can't stand the way that most priests talk in the state church or elsewhere.

Lord, in the name of Jesus.

This podcast started off the back of a chat I had in a restaurant in Sydney.

Now we're having the groanies.

And in those pretentious classes that don't have a round base and they make you look drunk.

This time, we're in Melbourne and we're at My Bart.

We're at the pub just near my work.

And it's kind of it's not quite the journos pub

But like we used to have 20 years ago where if you're looking for a journal

You'd literally rang the phoenix and everyone an answer before they had mobile phones because  
literally they were always the pub

This is my my choice and we've got a glass sit up to that

It's actually flat see it sits on the table. I promise I'm not drunk in fact

I'm trying to see clearly I've met Andrea here to look back at where we started this podcast and

And what we've learned about Hillsong over the months since I was in Sydney and I went to court  
every day

## [Transcript] Faith on Trial: Hillsong / The Verdict

for the first two weeks of the trial and then  
Brian's brother was sitting right behind me and he had a coughing fit at one point  
And I had these little mints and I turned around and I was like hey just take my mince  
They're from like cotton on or something not very fancy mince and he was so grateful and he kept  
saying to me again  
Again, like thank you so much. You saved my life like that's it's so hard when you can't cough  
So I like started building a little connection with him  
Andrea thought that connection with Brian's brother might help her get an interview  
Brian had these people around him all the time  
But they'd left and I called you and I said he's almost on his own you were like go up to him  
Ask if he can come on the podcast  
So I am I did and I just happened on the shoulder and I said like hey Brian my name's under it  
And he's like no not interested and I was like okay, okay  
That's happened. I didn't tap in the shoulder  
I was like excuse me Brian and I just started like ranting. I was like my producer Stephen drills  
making a podcast about you  
He's sent you an email. We were just wondering he just turns around  
He's just like I don't understand what you're saying and he turns back to Bobby and I was like that's  
okay  
It's probably because I'm Norwegian and then he kind of stopped and he's like oh and he turned  
around and looked at me  
And I was like hi Brian my name's Andrea and I think I just said we would like to give me we're  
making a podcast about Hillsong  
I like to give you a right of response  
Do you want to go on the podcast? He said no and I said okay. That's the last of it. I  
Was struggling to think of a way to end this podcast. I wasn't sure what to say to bring it all together  
Then I remembered something  
We're at that pub having a drink talking about what we've learned about Hillsong  
It's a bit rushed  
Andrea's running late to meet a friend for dinner in Chinatown  
We'd stop recording, but she asked me to turn the tape back on again  
So  
We're spoken a lot of people for this podcast, but  
What's your thoughts on dry? You've heard all this you've been editing every single interview  
You've been listening to it again and again  
What's your takeaway? How do you feel about Hillsong now?  
I  
Feel a lot of things I think mainly for me the thing that's it out to me is there's like those documents  
We read and hearing from all these women and about how they've been treated  
Hearing these first-hand stories of sexual harassment and sexual assault. I think at the end of the  
day  
I just think about those women. I think about that nanny, you know  
Carlin's nanny I think about all these women who have been they went to a church because they  
want to sing and they want to

## [Transcript] Faith on Trial: Hillsong / The Verdict

You know, they wanted to find their faith again  
Which I totally respect and understand and they found this like  
Community that that they thought was gonna bring them so much joy and it it destroy their lives  
completely like we don't know  
Where those women are today or how they're going, but I just my thoughts are with them because  
they joined something  
They thought was gonna, you know make their life so much better and richer and then in the church  
Men who just destroyed them and that's obviously not what they thought was gonna happen  
So I just think about them and I think about all the women who haven't spoken out  
There's obviously since we know of a sum we know of a few that's gonna be so many others  
So that makes me really sad  
That's for me the thing that stands out the most and I'm just  
So proud of all these people speaking out against the church because that must be really hard  
And I think yeah, it must be really hard, but they did it all those women  
The ones who talked about Hillsong having a rape culture the ones who said they were told to  
physically submit to their husbands  
The ones who said they tried to complain about male pastors only it went nowhere  
The whistleblower who leaked thousands of financial documents that were tabled in Parliament  
All of them spoke out  
So did Brett Singstock who was sexually abused by Frank Houston and could have chosen to remain  
anonymous  
But he went public. I've emailed and called Hillsong over and over and over again over the past few  
months  
They've never answered my questions and when Andrea went up to the church's founder Brian  
Houston and asked if he wanted to say anything  
He said no  
Those who run the church said nothing. I now know how I want to finish this podcast with a quote  
from the Bible  
It's not from that one. I was given at Hillsong service at Festival Hall in Melbourne. That's a New  
Testament version  
This is from the Old Testament from the book of Psalms  
Chapter 39 verse 2. I was mute and silent. I held my peace to no avail and  
My distress grew worse  
Oh  
This has been faith on trial I'm Stephen drill co-host and writer  
Andrea T. Severson started out as producer but became a co-host and editor  
Daniel Levine is producer and series researcher  
Dan box is executive producer. Sheba Raul is digital editor  
Ainsley Horstman and Lillian Soleil commissioned this podcast  
I  
I  
I'm Andrew rule the host of the podcast a life and crimes here are some of the things that we've  
been talking about the last few weeks  
The brutal truth is that when you start looking at it

## **[Transcript] Faith on Trial: Hillsong / The Verdict**

They always kill or injure a lot more than each other. The professional hit man used to be a professional hit man  
evil strikes in all forms, but  
Particularly as stupidity  
Life and crimes is available wherever you get your podcasts