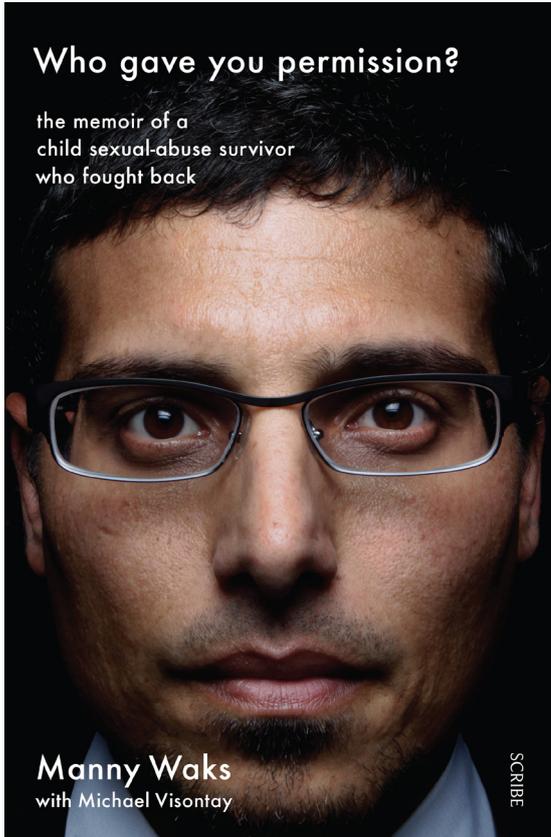


## Who Gave You Permission?

MANNY WAKS



‘Who gave you permission to speak to anybody?’ Rabbi Telsner, the leader of the Yeshivah Centre, thundered during his regular weekly sermon. It was a question directed to Manny Waks’s father, after Manny had finally gone public with his accusations of sexual abuse and its cover-up within the centre.

Manny Waks was raised in an ultra-Orthodox Jewish family, the second oldest of 17 children. As an adolescent he was sexually abused at the religious school across the road from where he lived. Betrayed by those he trusted, Manny rebelled against his way of life, though he later went on to become a prominent Jewish community leader.

In mid-2011 Manny went public about his experiences to bring justice to the abusers, and those who covered up their crimes. For his courage in speaking out, Manny and his family were intimidated and shunned by their community. Although he has been forced to leave Australia, Manny continues to advocate for survivors and hold those in power to account.

This is the story of a man who shattered a powerful code of silence, the battles he has fought, the vindication he has earned, and the extraordinary toll it has taken on his personal life and that of his loved ones.

It is also the raw self-portrait of a man on a mission, trying to live his life. Manny’s journey reminds us of the difference one man can make, and the price he has to pay.

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How does Waks approach the broader theme of institutionalised abuse in the book?
2. Discuss the risks that Waks had to weigh up in deciding to speak out against his abusers.

### BOOK DETAILS

Format: Paperback  
ISBN:9781925321623  
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### AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Manny Waks is currently CEO of Kol v'Oz, an organisation he established to address child sexual abuse in the global Jewish community. Prior to this, Manny held numerous senior leadership positions within the Australian Jewish community, and has done extensive work as a victim advocate.

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### REVIEWS

'A gripping narrative of exceptional power.'

ALAN GOLD, *J-WIRE*

'Absorbing ... Waks tells how he became a "reluctant troublemaker", speaking out on behalf of those who fear to do so, and of the renewed sense of purpose this role has given him.'

FIONA CAPP, *THE AGE*

'A forthright and compelling narrative ... *Who Gave You Permission?* is particularly recommended for parents, teachers, and others entrusted with the care of children, and for all people committed to ending the societal scourge of child sexual abuse. It will also give strength and hope to victims and survivors.'

ANNE WEBB, +61

3. How did Waks' actions effect his family and his community?
4. Where did Waks find support in his journey to seek justice, and where did he find roadblocks?
5. How did the Jewish community respond to Waks' initial claims, and how did this effect his resolve to seek justice?
6. Having grown up in the Jewish community, what impact did being ostracised from it have on Waks' mental health?
7. Discuss the importance of victims of abuse being survivor advocates and how this effects the social discourse.
8. How do the themes of family and sibling/parental love play out in Waks' experience?
9. What was the outcome of Waks' actions, and how did this change his involvement in the Jewish community?
10. What role does faith play in the way the Jewish community responded to Waks' claims?



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