

Senate Inquiry to former forced adoptions dated 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2011.

Re: Kerri Saint, Founding member and chairperson of W.A.S.H, (White Australian Stolen heritage).

I cannot account the exact time that I first noticed my back but I do know all attempts to alleviate the pain through massage, chiropractic manipulation and traction was not working.

During my first pregnancy the pain increased and I experienced moments of being paralysed for short periods of time. I went to the hospital and they x-rayed my back and I don't know who got more of a shock but the doctor or me. The only words I heard him say was, "Only God could fix that"! I did not have the money at the time to see a specialist and was determined to just keep living and not change a thing. There was no explanation for such an injury at the time other than perhaps scoliosis a birth defect, I had not yet remembered the abuse as a child that was another 7 years to come.

As the years rolled on, I began to have greater and great pain, especially with each child. Whilst I was pregnant with my last child in 2000 my GP at the time was able to give me heat and laser treatment so that I could refrain from taking strong pain killers for the sake of my child. It was then that the person treated me realised it was skeletal, not muscular. Somehow I manage to only remember my x-ray at 20, telling him what I was told years ago.

I was sent for a CT scan after the birth of my son; it was then that I truly saw how bad my back was. Within a few days I was sitting in front of a specialist in the private rooms at the Buderim Hospital. As soon as Doctor Terry Coyne sighted my scans he immediately asked if I had been in a car accident of bashed, in fact the way he asked it was not a question but a statement.

I told him or more like questioned why he would say that, 'It's a birth defect, isn't it? He said no! And categorically asked again what truck had I been hit by. I think I froze for a moment and asked him to explain the difference between a birth defect and injury sustained out of the womb, which he did but I think I went into shock. When he finished explaining all I could say was that I had not been in a car accident and dearly wished I was somewhere else. I did not want to talk about my childhood, of the beatings, slave labour and work I had to do which had come to my memory in 2007 seven years prior.

The doctor told me placing a rod down my back would be futile and not give me any release; he mentioned something about having to operate on the vertebrae anyway which he thought to be dangerous. He told me my back would get worse with age and I told him no one was going to touch my back as I had heard of too many stories of people ending up in wheel chairs. I went home and the strange thing is I barely mentioned it to any one and did not follow up with the specialist again. I continued to have pethidine and morphine injections infrequently, sometimes I was taken to hospital as the pain was so debilitating that I could not move off the ground where I feel to my Knee's in agony. All the hospital could do was give me more pain killers.

Now I am on panadiene forte 2 twice a day and slow release oxycontin 40 mg twice a day. When I have a bad day I have 80mg twice a day. I now see a pain specialist who has helped me understand

the impact that my body had to receive at the time of the injury and how I would have been affected when it happened. After sharing some of my past with my specialist at Nambour hospital and trying so hard not to cry I explained the work I did and how violent the adoptive parents would be. This is the first time that I shared in detail what I endured as a child.

He told me he could not say what could have caused the injury such as being thrown, hit or kicked. That I would have been in immense pain and been unable to walk for a period of time. I shared the type of abuse I received at the hand of my adopters, but he said it had to be much worse and was very concerned that I was unable to remember. Because of this, he encouraged me to go back to counselling for fear that the memory would be too devastating to deal with on my own. I do not ever remember being un-able to walk, in fact I recall never being allowed to lie around, even if I had a chronic headache that I now know are migraines. He feels it was one event that caused this fracture to my back, not a series of smaller ones. If you call being kicked with army boots, thrown around and hit as minor.

I don't ever remember being seen by a doctor as a child; pertaining to my back or my debilitating migraines. What is most shocking is that I had to work like a man, perhaps lifting and carrying many logs and charcoal bags in a day. No wonder my back is caving in on me now.

My first visit to the pain specialist, Doctor Lattik was last year, I had waited over 2 years to see him. Just before Christmas I had a minor operation to help block off the nerve that was causing the majority of pain. I was struggling not to dissociate, this was happening more readily as my back deteriorated. Every time I went for physio I dissociated which was very upsetting for me, I hate anyone seeing me like that. I took a chance with the procedure as there was no guarantee it would work and for how long. It did but only for 3 months.

I do not know what my future holds with such a bad injury to my back, my work life is now very limited not to mention activities with my grandchildren and children. I was once a very fit and active woman and now I am on daily medication and have to assess before hand, every job I wish to tackle and say 'is it worth staying in bed for days or going to hospital for,' because that is the consequences for me, that everyone else can accomplish without a second thought.

Thank you  
Kerri Saint

PTSD Images

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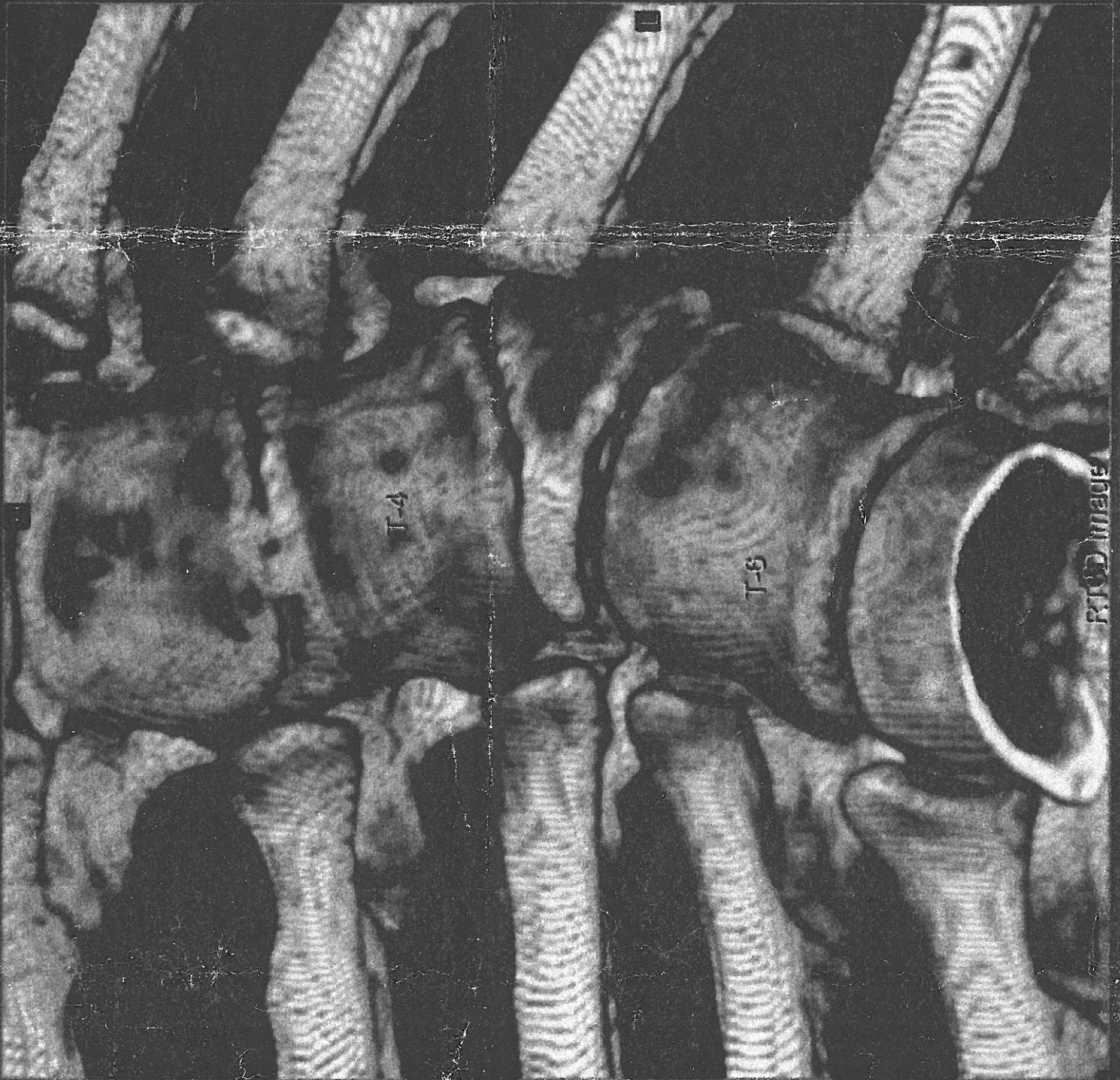
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