



Diana Witchard

4.
19-8-03

To whom it may concern,

I, Verneta Lohse am writing this letter on behalf of my sister Diana for she can not read or write, this is what happened to me.

I came from a poor family of six children I am the second eldest girl and I helped my mother a lot.

Every time my mother went into hospital to have a baby my sister Verneta and I were put into a home, one was Seabird at Bondi the other was at Manly the last one was Mater Die Orphanage at Camden - that is where my life changed a lot.

My mother put me in the orphanage, I was 9 years when I got my first period and my father started to bring his drunken mates home and my eldest sister Rhonda was frightened that something would happen to me because my mother work from six in the morning till six in the night.

Our eldest sister Rhonda took us up to Mater Die orphanage it took us a long time to get up there for we came from Balmain, when we got there the Mother Superior was there, she took my sister into a room etc sign some papers, then she got into the taxi that she came in crying her eyes out there was no kisses or hugs for us for

she had to go for it was getting and she had a long way to go home that must of killed her.

The Mother Superior took us over to the childrens residents and there was another nun there she had such a hard face told us to strip off and put our clothes in a pile, we never seen them again, we were taken up stairs to a room which they called the shop, she gave us some other clothes and then us took us to the dormitories, it looked like when we were in hospital, she showed us our beds which were in different dormitories she mad saw we were separated from each other, that night my sister Verneta came into bed with me crying it was a big day for her she was only 8 1/2 years old, some time in the night the Nun came out pulled the blankets of us told us to get out of bed it was a sin for having my sister in bed with me she punched me in the middle of the back and told me and my sister to stand in the hallway in the dark ~~at~~ and that's where we stayed all night, about 4 o'clock (I think) I was told to go down to the Laundry, chopped wood and do the washing, all by hand, there was these reall big round tubs to put the wet clothes in, and another girl and I had to carry it down to the clothes line and hang them out NO pegs and it was in the middle of winter.

Then they sent me to the class room for catechism, that's is what you call bloody education, then I was called out for the kitchen on the childrens side I would stay there untill we were finished all our work which was 7 o'clock, so the other girl and myself were there from 5 o'clock in the morning till 7 o'clock pm that was our job for the week.

The next week I was on the ironing room two days ironig for the nuns, and the other 3 days was for my 3 little girls I was incharge of and anything else that had to be done.

Then I was put on the cow yard I new nothing about cows because I came from the city, you would start a 4 o'clock till 8 am, have breakfast lock after the 3 girls.

They put me into six class I couldn't do the work so they sent me down to kindergarten how embarrassing that was for me, I couldn't do the work there the nun called me all the stuift names she could lay her tounge to that was my school work. I didn't go to school after that, the nuns always found job for me.

The most embassing time was when we where having our showers no doors and the nun would stand and whatch but teach us it was a mostel sin to look at each other with nothing on.

One day our Mother came up to see us

visiting hours was only once a month from 10am - 3pm she got there at 3-30pm she got lost on the way up but she got there she got out of the taxi, after a while Mother Superior came down and told her she would have to leave that it was too late, can you imagine how we felt, it was 3 months since we had seen her, another time she came up my father was there with a car full of drunken friends, mum got out of the taxi and came over to us my father came behind her and punched her around, we were all crying a nun came down to see what was going on and told him to leave the premises so he got in the car with his friends and left us crying mum with blood everywhere and she was told to leave in the next taxi that comes as she was going down my sister Vernetta ran after her crying please don't leave us mum, the nun told me to get her she was breaking her heart and hanging on to my leg, she was here so compassionate they pulled Vernetta off me and said to be so stupid that's why you are here because no one wants you.

There was no love or affection in the orphanage no one to talk to and tell how you are feeling, this is how it was for me for the years I was in there, I was an unpaid slave just there to do the work.

I was so sick of the nuns calling me names and putting me down never a kind word always you are worthless.

When I was 15 my grandmother took me out for the Xmas Holidays for the first time, she was bedridden, my birthday was on the 5-2-59 and the nuns told her not to bring me back that you left when you were 15 years old.

Anyway I meet a boy looking for some one to love me and I felt pregnant I was only 16 years old, I told my Aunt she told me to get out that I couldn't have the baby there, the father of the baby didn't come around for eight weeks & when I told him, when he did come around my Aunt told him that he has to do something about it so he agreed to get married.

For 23 years I was with him, I had 2 children, and tried my hardest to keep my marriage together for I wanted my kids to have what I didn't have, my children didn't know I couldn't read or write but they knew there was something ~~was~~ wrong when they heard their father calling me ~~stupid~~ stupid and you'd no good like your mother, it was no different then being in the orphanage.

~~All my jobs when I was young were~~
only physical work

All my life the jobs I could only get were all physical, I'm 60 years old now have been to tech to try to learn to

read and write for 6 years couldn't learn much at all, then a teacher came she was a dislexic teacher and I was doing so well with her for a while, she took some test with me and the next week I came back she said sit down I want to tell you something, she said my I.Q. was very High and I could have done a lot in my life if they had found this ~~about~~ when you were young, no one ever told me that before, I broke down ~~and~~ and cry to her No one knows what it is like to get on the wrong Bus or train and never to read a book or Magazine and there has never anyone out there to help me, it has been a very hard road for me all my life, I'm very tired now in my later years, I couldn't go back and live my life again, I have been on my own for 23 years.

My greatest achievement in my life was four years ago when I got my desired licences it was something for myself.

It's so sad to think that you go through life with no love or affection for that starts from when you are a child, I can't remember ever my Mother father or anyone cuddling me or telling me they loved me, I feel I'm very cold I don't know how to show love.

There is still a lot to deal with and I can't put it all on paper I wouldn't be able to do this little only that I

trust my sister to put this down for me for I can't do it for myself.

I will never forget the time my sister did something little wrong in the orphanage the nun came out a bamboo stick and wacked her hands and around her legs it took 2 weeks for the marks to go away I came out a told the nun to leave my sister alone and then she turned on me and hit me to, they where never any birthdays and No Xmas, there are so many things I could tell you but I would never finish this letter.

From Diana Witchard