



27-8-03

To whom it may concern

In 1945 my mother took me to the Salvation Army girls' home in Newtown, Hobart, with the promise of retrieving me in a couple of months.

At the age of 7 and she didn't return I got upset and started bed wetting.

I was made to wash my own sheets in cold water. If we girls wet our pants they were tied under our noses and we were made to stand behind a door for up to an hour or more or until they were dry. If we took a morsel of food without permission we were forced to swallow a large glass of liquorice powder which made us run to the toilet for a week.

Every Saturday we had our hair washed and then rinsed with sheep dip. We also had to drink a large cup of Epsom salts which often led to accidents that we were punished for.

One day I called a girl a silly little devil

after she had collided with me, for that I was slapped so hard in the face it knocked me down on my backside. I also received a thrashing for being on a swing on Sunday. When one got into trouble by the staff you were also taunted by the other girls. It took very little to get into trouble. I remember getting a slap from the Matron which made my nose bleed just for having my hand on my hip.

We all had to do the housework and when I was to I had to scrub a very long verandah every morning some days it was below 0° I had chilblains on my hands and feet and if the job wasn't satisfactory I had to start again.

After meals we had to wash the dishes but this made us late for school particularly after lunch this resulted in a caning from firstly the class teacher and then the Headmaster.

One day the Headmaster thrashed the girl sitting next to me for looking out of the window and because I looked at her he beat me too while screaming "Do you want war or peace?"

At bath time we had to line up naked and as one got out another would get in using the same water for 6-7 girls in full view of the person using the toilet.

When we had our periods we were given a bag with 6 large pieces of rag in it and with our name on it. Once used we had to scrub these until spotless - no bleach, just our skinless hands.

At 14 I ran away after refusing to wear a pair of bathers with large holes in them.

The police returned me 3 days later.

That night I was taken to the bathroom stripped from the waist down bent over the bath with my hands in the bottom of the bath and was whipped with a very thick strap.

I was told to cry but I wouldn't and didn't until I went to bed. I had huge black and red welts from my waist to my knees and broken skin in places and blood blisters.

The worst thing happened about 2 weeks after leaving the home. I still went to the church and was walked home by a male officer who raped me and left me to walk home in a traumatic state.

There are numerous horror stories a lot of which I don't want to remember.

I have shed so many tears I can't cry anymore. Thank you for caring.

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