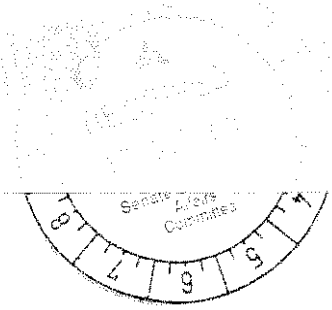


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Dear Sir/Madam,

my story started in 1944 when I along with my two sisters were relinquished into 'care'. While it was the fault of a young wayward mother initially, the years that followed were fraught with an emotional rollercoaster. I had no memory of Mother, father or my eldest sister, as I was 18 months old at the time of going into 'care'. After more than a few placements I was sent to a 'suitable' foster home where one sister already was placed. Everything was okay for a couple of years and suddenly things changed. We were deprived of food, clothing, furniture and any sort of physical or emotional care. We were locked up in our bare lifeless bedroom for most of our waking hours except for school where we bore the brunt of cruel tormenting because of our disreputable dirty appearances. The Welfare Reports likened us to 'Little Cinderellas'. This treatment was child abuse in the worse sense because the family were affluent people, he, a solicitor, she, a socialite, hitting a day with the buckle end of the strap was because I continually wet the bed and there were flea marks on the mattress !!

no sheets or decent blankets, simply an army camp
stretcher and 1 grey army blanket winter or summer
The room stank of urine, with no way to get rid of
the smell as she had nailed the windows shut! The
door was always locked after we had crept in like
criminals from school, with a piece of sticky tape!
That is how conditioned we were to her abuse, we
were too scared to open the "locked door" even to
go to the bathroom, no wonder I wet the bed. The
lack of food made me into a thief, for self preser-
vation, I stole lunches at school from the canteen
for my sister and myself. We would hide under the
school building scoffing the fresh buns of
which we were never given. I then was given the
reputation as the school thief and suffered many
ridiculous indignities when money went missing. I had no need
for money as we never went into a shop, or even
an one until we left that horror house.

In my files it is documented for more than two
years the abuse and neglect we were subjected
to. The officers made regular calls at all hours
and always we were 'locked' in that 'cell' having
had no dinner. We would stand to attention
when the door was opened, each time it was
Mrs Young v Welfare Officer, she would always
lead for me to be taken away and...

2

disciplinary Training. Reading that part made me
soil with anger, she should have been trained in
the art of caring for kids. I was only 9 when
at last the big black car came and took us away
there is so much more to that chapter but all I
can say is the welfare should not have left us
there all that time, we were in abject misery
and no child should have to feel that way.

Bidura was our first stop and what a cultural
shock it was! coming from the upper north
Shore Cour room excepted) to this cold dismal
institution. We weren't there long before a placement
was found. Nice people, although we couldn't relate
to 'nice'. The lady decided in her wisdom that I needed
special training (that word again) to be a decent human
being, whereas my sister was very compliant and
gentle and would easily be placid. Seemed people
likened us to animals from the RSPCA!!
+ bit flippant, but isn't that what happens to dogs?
one can be placed because it's docile, the other
needs disciplinary training to be of any use.
That's how I interpreted her (well meaning)
assumption. She actually bought me a puppy in

4

Place of my sister! The sudden separation (no-one discussed it with us) left me devastated, drained emotionally, who could I turn to now for comfort? I would continually run away and sit for hours on the setty wishing I had the nerve to drown myself in the deep green sea. I never saw my sister again until our reunion in 1982. This was only 1952.

I became too morose and hard to handle so back to Bidara until I went to King Edward - Newcastle where I thought I was reasonably happy. I had three foster placements from there none of them successful, my fault I was told. From King Edward I went to Lynwood Hall where the principal, Miss Davies, was a foul mouthed tyrant. When I say foul mouthed I don't mean swearing, she could lecture us every morning in assembly on the evils of life likening us impressionable girls to cockroaches and vermin. On alternate days she would say we all had come from the gutter like our families and THAT was where we would all

end up, we were called ^s sluts, whores and
'prostitutes' on numerous occasions, we knew
they were bad words but none of us really knew
the true meanings of same, or why she implied
we were what she said? Really that woman
should not have been in charge of young girls
struggling through their emotional teens. Mr
Tucker & Mr Heffernan thought Lynwood with
Miss Davies at the helm was a jewel in the
crown of welfare homes. Huh!

I already wrote about the lack of education
afforded us in these institutions as domestic
drudgery was what we were 'trained' for,
I had a couple of live in jobs (domestic)
and hated them for various reasons, so
I ended up in Parramatta Girls School. My
God! what a horrific place that and the girls
shelter were. Run like a gaol, food and
clothes the same as gaol even to the extent
of only a spoon to eat with (as a precaution to
violence) we were teenage girls! not crims.

The two men in charge, Mr Johnstone and Mr Gordon subjected girls to sexual & physical Abuse. I only copped physical abuse for laughing uncontrollably in Assembly, he soon wiped the smile off my face with the huge bunch of keys he swung continually, for just such a purpose I'm guessing. Mr Gordon was the one on this occasion, AFTER the whack across my face (of which I still bear a scar) he literally hrough me down the stone steps to the cells and I had to stay there freezing all night and half the next day. They should never have been in charge of girls, we were open to them as who could we complain to? Most of us were sentenced there for simply being uncontrollable, that charge covered a multitude of things. I particularly want to mention Dr Green who had the dubious 'pleasure' of internally examining every girl from the gurts. The 'Dr' would wear pink thick gloves and sister would pin us to the examining

Table while he roughly ^I pulled our legs apart, and before we knew what had happened he would shove his filthy thick gloved fingers into our PRIVATE PARTS. He Always wrote in his notes that the girl (whoever) was sexually active with low moral standards. I was devastated when I read my report, I had no idea what he was TALKING about, kissing, to me was sexual. I guess many girls of that era (50's) were so naive we thought kissing was how you got pregnant. Of course we liked boys and most of them were innocent too, heavy petting took the place of actual intercourse, but we were guilty) of low morals. The worse part of all this was standing before Judge McEneaney and having to tell a packed court room how your boy-friend kissed you and what else did he do? we were always charged with neglect, it was stamped on our files like some common eximiac, why weren't the people responsible for our wellbeing charged with neglecting? I could never work that out.

when I was released from Parramatta
 I did what I had been accused of doing
 and immediately fell pregnant, drifted
 into a loveless violent marriage, with a
 man who has his own story to tell, had 5
 children, 3 of whom inherited their father's
 manic depression and are struggling through
 life. I am raising a little grandson with
 cerebral palsy from one of my sons who's
 partner died of a drug overdose. I guess
 the wheels keep turning with different
 problems but it basically boils down to
 how one is treated during childhood.
 My children were loved by me, maybe ineptly,
 but abused many times by their father.
 I still find life hard to deal with in certain
 situations, such as being in the company of happy
 well adjusted people who wouldn't have a clue as
 to the many many nights of childish aching for
 someone to even smile at me and show
 approval, a little love...

been welcome but ⁷not knowing what that emotion is I wonder if I could have accepted love. I Longed and fantasized about my mother coming to rescue me, she would scoop me up and TAKE me home to the smell of home cooking, That was my fantasy I clung to.

I was very angry to read all through my earlier files how my mother and maternal and paternal grandmothers all TRIED for access visits. They were denied each time as my mother was deemed to have fallen from grace, an old fashioned Turn of phrase but apt I suppose. My father although separated from his wife was also denied access.

I always was the only one with no visitors therefore no goodies on a Sunday. If only I could have met them I would at least have had a MENTAL PICTURE TO REMEMBER OF THEM.

I hope I haven't drizzled on too long¹⁰
but Pere is so much more I can't put
into words. I hope families aren't
separated these days, if for some reason
it's necessary then they must keep in contact
even a letter, something! Otherwise one
lives through life half complete, if it's
one's own choice to disassociate from
family then it's a choice, my life was
never allowed choices.

In closing, I'm not bitter & twisted! but there
is so much normality missing that most people
take for granted, and I feel I've missed out
on a fundamental right of knowing who I am
and where I come from.

Jay Bill