



21/2/2007

To The Senate Community Affairs References Committee

My Name is Elaine Goldsworthy.

I was born Elaine Veronica Hodge. Born in Sydney 7/9/1933. Parents name on Birth Certificate only known to me after I turned 15 1/2 and had my Certificate to start work.

I have only a vague memory of the first Home I was in which was at Rowellan Sydney I was told I was about 2 or 3 yrs old.

I was then sent to ST Joseph's Orphanage at Croydon for a few yrs. Then sent to ST Joseph's at Lane Cove for a few yrs + then to the Sisters of Mercy at Ryde till 1948 at 15 1/2.

I also had a sister + a Brother. 1 yr younger sister 3 yrs younger. My sister and I were very rarely in the same convent together due to the age difference. as the convents had a Policy of having kids for a certain age then we had to move on. I was told my Mother was dead + my father at the war: Which I later on found out to be untrue regarding my mother. + true of my father.

P.T.O.

The Reason for this letter is to tell a little of my memories in the convents.

1st one at Croydon. Was the beltings The Punishments given to us girls who wet the bed or soiled our clothes. We were made to stand up the Bath Tub with the wet sheets over our heads till they dried then sometimes they were wet again with water from the tap & we continued to have to stand there. The cane was used often as was a Black Belt if we question or answer back. The cleaning of Bathrooms & toilets was also part of our duties. Remaning we were only 6y5 to 8yrs of nine.

The next home was Lane Cove. This was the worst from then on as I got older & started to fight back. The treatment got worse. Thick heavy rulers were used to belt me behind my knees if I fell I was made to stand up & cuffed another one. I was also picked up by my ears and put down again. Hands were used to belt my head between my ears. Which made me deaf. I had an operation in the Sixties at the Royal Melbourne Eye & Ear Hospital to try to give me back some hearing. One ear being successful one not. also the Hospital corrected a deformed lower nose cartilage due to having my nose twisted between the fingers of the nuns involved. We also had Punishments of being put in Wash Places

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till I learnt I was not to answer Back.
Places like little rooms for setting soap we had to make. The Rooms if you call them that were long alcoves in which trays & trays of soap were set. after we made them. We also were made to use industrial floor Polishers to Polish wooden Dornitings & we also worked in the Laundry with heavy Machines & long long mangles to Press sheets & Bed covers of white linen. The memory of the Laundry is a bad one. Due to an accident which happened there I have no idea now How old I was over 10 or 11 I think or even what year. all I can remember. is an argument between a young girl & a Nun who was always very nasty to us & in this instance to this young girl. They were near this long mangle & I think the girl was hit by the Nun. The girl hit the nun Back. & somehow The nun lost her footing & she was caught in the Mangle by her head. she died. & the Girl was sent to Gladsville Mental Hospital. We heard later on she committed Suicide by jumping out of a window.

I was also called Horrible names like Dodge by nature. Dodge by name & Dodge around the Bush. when I would try to find some

P.T.O

see no more. after one of treatments.
the next home was at The Sisters of Mercy
' RYDE.

left there at age 14 or 15 yrs. The treatment
here was a little different because I was older
found ways to survive mentally by reading
books + learning to sew + mend The Nuns Habits
also grew up without ever wearing a Bra
' which I needed one from the age of 12 yrs on
left the convent weighing 5 + 2 to 6 stone. with
lots of Health Problems. my hearing, my nose
constant Pain in the Stomach. I was sent
by The Dr. who knew my Granmother to a
nursing Home at Concord for a few weeks
' Dr could not find an Physical reason for
my Pain:

found out on leaving the convent I had a
granmother at Bondi. I can not to this
day tell you how I arrived there or even
who took me to Her. I started work in
' Pyjama Factory in central Sydney.
found out later my Brother also was at
' Bullock Hills + Westmead

was told at the age of 16 yrs. By a relative of
my Granmother that my mother was still alive
but very ill in a Hospital in Sydney. I went
to see her + eventually lived with her till I
married. Both Parents + Grandparents share all

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Died. as have all their Brothers & Sisters
 But as that is a different story I see
 no need to write any further of my life
 since Marriage

Only to say I thought I had healed my
 self of my memories till I started to hear
 about this enquiry & other Peoples stories
 and realized I needed to also lay my
 own Ghosts of the past. it also helps
 me to know that perhaps my story can be
 of help to others & help them to heal as
 well.

I also know I've not written everything that
 happened as I've have tried over the yrs to
 let my mind release the thoughts so as to
 enable me to live my life and survive

• I thank you all sincerely for reading this
 letter and for taking the time to read other
 Peoples & perhaps out of tradgy some good
 will come for our future kids.

Goodby & God Bless you all

I remain yours
 Elaine Goldsworthy

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