

## To the Senate Enquiry.

At the age of 2 years and 8 months I was removed from my parents care and placed in the Ballarat orphanage. I was in the home until 15 years of age. I was a physically and emotionally abused child. I believe the orphanage was owned by the Church of England & was run by the Victorian Government. The year was 1948.

Every morning until my seventh birthday, we were woken up at 6-45am and had to dress ourselves, have a wash, clean our teeth and then line up to have our hair combed. Most days I had my hair pulled or was hit extremely hard on the head with the comb. A lot of kids had this done to them.

I was taken to the kitchen every morning after breakfast and made to drink an extra bottle of milk. (these were the free bottles of milk that were allocated to the home by the Government)

This milk was always warm as it was not stored in the fridge.

I often told them that I didn't want it because I had had enough food for breakfast but my protest was always ignored and I had to stay until I had finished every last drop.

They said that I was too thin. I believe that this caused me to suffer from diarrhoea as I now know I am lactose intolerant.

One night when I was about 4 years of age I soiled my bed. I was woken and dragged out of bed by the night nurse at approx 6-30am (I think she must have smelt it) She dragged me to the wash room, picked me up and threw me into the concrete trough and then scrubbed me all over with a scrubbing brush and **cold** water. She then dragged me to the dressing room, picked me up and thumped me down on the bench feet first.

I was naked, half wet and shivering from fear and the cold. She then proceeded to berate me by telling the other kids what she had done and why if anyone else dared to do it, they would get the same treatment.

God only knows how my legs were not broken.

If I had been awake and gone to the toilet, I would have got a belting. I was in a **NO WIN SITUATION**. I had night mares for years over this incident.

One night when I was about 10, I must have had one of these night mares as I woke up standing on the window sill above my bed, the light was on and in the doorway stood the homes Superintendent Mr Morten, his wife (nick named **HAG**) and all the board members. While I was not fully awake, Mr Morten asked me "what are you doing up there". Because I couldn't answer straight away **HAG** yelled at me "**ANSWER MY HUSBAND**". I think I must have given them a stupid look, as I was unaware of what had happened. After these idiots left the room and turned out the lights, the other

girls asked me why I had screamed and I told them that I was unaware that I had. The Mortens and the board members were in the upstairs board room with the door shut, so my screams must have been loud. I still don't know what I was dreaming about that night.

One day at school (I was 5 years of age ) in prep grade, we were sitting on the mat on the floor listening to the teacher read a book. The Kid behind me started acting the fool. The teacher stood up & picked up a **huge** black board ruler, leaned over half the class, tried to hit the boy on the head but missed and hit me instead. I can't remember much of what happened after that so I would be justified in saying that I probably had concussion. There was never an apology and they did not even take me to the Doctor to be checked out. Most of the kids and I were often hit on the head and accused of something that never happened and if we attempted to deny the allegation, we would get a smack in the mouth. I believe this intimidating behaviour was to keep us in line. There is no other explanation. **This was done to kids of all ages.** This caused most kids to be fearful of doing any thing wrong.

When I turned 7 I left the toddlers block and moved into what was referred to as the Big kids block. (7-16 Year olds.)

This was an Education and a half!!!

Every child in this group were used as unpaid slaves!!!( please contact me if you need details.)

I often witnessed staff mistreating the kids that were bed wetters. They would dress the boys in girls clothing and dress the girls in boys clothing, then line them up and tell them that they would be fed to the pigs. Whenever this happened I always wished I was 10 ft tall and had a **GUN.**( Wish full thinking Hey!!!)

One of the girls that this happened to was my own sister. I heard later that one of the girls in this group had died of a kidney disease called Nephritis at the age of 21. My point being that not one of these kids was ever checked out by a Doctor.

Nearly every day there was at least one fight. These were extremely physical and it was punch for punch to the head. Some of these kids were bullies and if you didn't learn to protect yourself, you would become the target of their bullying.

This I didn't have a problem with as I had older sisters that looked out for me until I was old enough to defend myself and I learned at a very early age that Bullies are cowards. I usually only hit them once and they would run. I also witnessed the staff giving older kids **VISCIOUS BASHINGS** for no apparent **REASON.**

When I was 15, we were having lunch on a particular day, I was sitting at one end of the table and a part aboriginal girl was at the other end telling jokes and laughing with me and 6 other girls at the table. A male staff member who was on duty came up behind me and gave me the hardest wack on the right ear. I turned and asked "what was that for" and before I could finish, he gave me another hard wack on the left ear. I stood up and threw my chair at him, he then grabbed me around the neck so I punched him as hard as I could between the legs to make him let go of me which he did. I ran outside yelling and calling out to him "**You're a big black bastard PHILPOTT**". I was wearing a chain around my neck which he broke from his actions and I had a **chain burn** the width of the front of my neck for a week. He was approximately 6ft tall and I was only 5ft 3ins. I thought of going to the police station around the corner, but did not bother when I was told that if I did they would send me to **WINLATON** detention centre.

When I was about 8, one of the male staff said something offensive to my sister, and being a kid I mouthed off and called him "Taylor Baylor". For this my punishment was to be called to the staff dining room and while the staff were having tea he asked me to repeat what I had said, so I did. Then he pulled out this big black strap, doubled it and gave me 6 of the hardest whacks on the back of my legs. This action left a leather splinter in the back of my right leg from the strap and because I hated and did not have any trust in the staff especially the Superintendents wife (**she was a nasty piece of work. 98% of the kids called her HAG.**), I did not have it checked out and instead got a bandaid from one of the kids. After a week it became infected. **HAG** found out about it and sent for me. She ripped the bandaid off and cleaned it with kerosene, then pushed me towards the door and told me to get to school. I looked at my leg and there was a hole the size of a \$1 coin. I still have the scar.

Another day I woke up with ear ache and an ear full of dried muck. I went to casualty. Matron Sharp was on, she took one look and told me to show it to **HAG**. She looked at it and told me to tell Matron to clean it with kerosene! Which she certainly did, she poured it in my ear and it ran into my eye. I was left wondering where did these **DICKHEADS** get their nursing skills from? I left school when I was 15 and worked as a kitchen hand for a few months. There were 2 cooks and myself. I had to keep the kitchen and floors clean at all times e.g. had to wash the cooks saucepans as they were finished with them, had to prepare potatoes and all other vegetables other than peas and beans, make porridge Saturday mornings, cut up stale bread twice a week for and warm milk (most of the kids called it bread and slops.) Clean and set

the tables in the staff dining room, waitress to staff, clear tables as they were finished eating, wash and dry staff dishes and keep the walk in fridge clean. Food was prepared for 200 kids and approx 20 staff.

When I left at age 15, I worked for a farmer and his wife. They had 1 son aged 8 and 2 daughters aged 5 & 6. The wife was pregnant with her 4th child. I had to get up at 6-15 am to prepare breakfast for the kids, make sure that the kids were washed and dressed for school and have the house work done before lunch. ( I hardly ever saw the woman before 11-00 am as she always slept in.) Every afternoon I had other chores to do i.e. Mondays she helped me do her washing. Tuesday I cleaned the silver ware and kitchen chairs. Wednesdays she helped me do her ironing. Thursdays I cleaned her windows and Fridays I scrubbed her bathroom tiles, bath, vanity basin etc. I had 1 day off per week usually Saturday. In my spare time after I had done the dishes at night, I knitted her 2 daughters a jumper each. Saturday afternoon I often taught 2 young girls how to improve their basketball skills. I enjoyed this time because these girls were fast learners and I got along well with them. I guess I missed playing net ball. ( These girls were the share farmers daughters and were of Dutch decent.) Whenever I was out playing net ball with the girls, the woman that I worked for always gave me dirty looks. I actually enjoyed being here, I didn't get abused, the farmer and his wife were very nice people and the kids were nice kids.

One Wednesday when she was helping me with the ironing , she asked me if I liked her? I thought about it for a few minutes, I did most of her house work with very little pay in return, so I answered her "do I have to". She went nuts and told me she would ring Miss Morrissy of the welfare department who was in charge of the girls after leaving the orphanage. She rang her and told her I was lazy and sulky etc.

I was then sent to Kew to work for a Doctor Phillips and his wife. They had 2 sons aged 13 years and 9 years and 2 daughters aged 11 years and 4 years, they also had 2 nephews living with them, a 13 year old and a 17 year old and a baby who I was told I would not have contact with. Mrs Phillips kept her in the nursery and looked after her. This woman is no different than the last woman I worked for!!! I had the same routine plus a bit more e.g. I had to scrub the carpet on the entertainment room floor with plush carpet cleaner and clean the venetian blinds. I had to pick up the 4 year old from KINDERGARDEN four days a week and then help Mrs Phillips get lunch. Every thing seemed fine until the 4 year old decided she wanted to play a game and not let me past the gate. After 6 times of being pushed back by this child I looked up and noticed her mother watching from the window and

smirking so I lost it and firmly moved the child to the side and ran into the house followed by the child who was throwing a tantrum.

When I got to the kitchen Mrs Phillips started telling me off, so I told her she should give her daughter a smack on the backside. I don't think she liked me saying this, so she threw a tantrum and told me I would be out of her house before the day was over. This happened on a Friday and Miss Morrissy couldn't place me until Monday. Mrs Phillips decided that she would give me all these extra jobs and told me to clean the venetion blinds and when I had finished those I was to scrub the entertainment room carpet. **I THOUGHT TO MYSELF PIGS ARSE I WILL** so I went on a **GO SLOW**.

While I was doing this she went to my room and went through my belongings, I had an open money box in my wardrobe which I had been saving my big **2 pound per week pocket** money. This is what I used to buy toiletry needs and had saved a bit from the last job as I couldn't go down the shop to buy magazines or chocolates like I had been able to at this place, so after I had gone to the shops the first time Madame Phillips had ordered to me to wear stockings when I attended church with them so I opened my money box and was able to buy the odd magazine and chocolates. When her husband came home he accused me of stealing this money from them. I told him that was the joke of the century, that they were actually stealing from me by using me as slave labour plus a few other things he didn't like hearing. He then rang Miss Morrissy again and someone picked me up and drove me to Bethany Elderly peoples home in Camberwell which was owned by the Salvation Army. While I was here I worked in the kitchen as a kitchen hand. My duties here were similar to the kitchen at the orphanage plus I had to take meals around to the patients who were bed ridden. The staff and girls here were O.K. and the elderly patients were the sweetest people I have ever met.

I had a meeting with Miss Morrissy the following week and told her a few home truths and how I felt, I also asked her if I could go to live with my mother who was living at Matong N.S.W. She fed me a line that she didn't think it was possible. I knew she had no intention of even trying but I kept asking her anyway. After a few months of this she rang the Matron and asked her to have me ring her. I did this and she told me that I was allowed to go home but I would have to pay my own way. Surprise, Surprise!!! I had often exchanged letters with my mother from aged 10 and received birthday cards, always with the promise that she would get me a present next year. So I was aware that she didn't have much money. I wasn't really prepared for what I was about to experience. My mother was very timid and

short of stature (4ft 11ins ), brow beaten and easily intimidated yet very loving and over protective of my 3 younger brothers and youngest sister. She never owed anybody anything and if there is a God he would know that she didn't deserve what life had dealt her!!!

Years later when she was dying in hospital, my eldest sister passed around copies of her file that the Welfare Department had hidden from us all those years! I was 42 years of age when I found out the full extent of how those Bastards mistreated and blatantly lied to my parents, my brothers and sisters and to myself all those years and got away with it. Please ask my eldest sister for a copy of her file. Read it and I will fill in the blanks.

My father saw his parents loose their property at Delegate during the depression, I believe that they could not afford to pay their rates. The people that subsequently bought the property got it for a song. This information was given by a cousin living in Orbost. This is where my fathers parents shifted to.

The welfare department did not have the **GUTS** to tell my parents that they would not be releasing their 7 children back to them. My father went to the Sergent in charge of the Stratford Police station who was also the Red Cross rep. At that time my father requested help. We were living in a huge tent and shed at Munro Vic and had been there for at least 6 months and this had never been a problem with this Sergent before as he was aware of the situation. My mother always made sure that the eldest children attended school and Sunday school.

My mother had just given birth to her 8<sup>th</sup> child and my father had been diagnosed with Tuberculosis.

This Sergent told my parents that the 4 eldest children would be taken to the Red Cross home at Berwick and the 3 youngest would be staying at my mothers parents farm at Buchan. This did not happen as at the last minute we were picked up by a Police woman and taken to Royal Park to be declared wards of the state and had my parents declared as unfit parents. This was all done without my parents knowledge.

It is recorded in the court notes that I was dressed in a thin cotton sleeveless dress. This was the Welfare Departments mischief as I have spoken to my mothers sister, Aunty Norma and she had taken a photo of us just before we were taken away. I was dressed in a woollen coat and woollen bonnet. So isn't this **PERJURY AND KIDNAPPING**. This Sergent stated in his report that if we were not taken, my brothers would no doubt become criminals.

This turned out to be the cruellest joke because my eldest brothers who were only 9& 10 years of age, kept running away to go home to our parents. Every time they did this and were caught they were sent to worse boys

homes. My Aunty Norma told me that she visited us at Royal Park and they had John the (3<sup>rd</sup> eldest) **chained to a bed.**

While my father was being treated for T.B. he worked as an orderly at the Heidelberg Repat Hospital. The Welfare Department made a statement claiming that my father never had T.B. at all, this I know to be a lie as my youngest daughter never had to be inoculated with the T.B. vaccine and when I asked the Doctor why he told me that she was immune to it because one of her Grandparents must have had the disease. I asked my husbands parents if they had ever had it and they said no one in their family had. No one in my mothers family had it either so this only left my Father. I was also told by my cousin at Orbost that one of my fathers sisters Husbands had it and he had been given a house for him and his family. So why didn't the Government give my parents a house. My Father could have caught the disease from his brother in-law as they often visited each other at the time my Father was diagnosed.

I applied for a copy of my file which I know is a **PACK OF LIES!!** They state that I was a nice little girl until I turned 13, then because I began to stand up to them and question their lies, I had a chip on my shoulder.

There is also a letter addressed to the welfare Department and written by the Superintendent Mr Ludbrook, stating that we should never be returned to our parents because our younger sister was deformed and I believe that this was Shirley that he was referring to. This is another **BLATANT LIE!!**. When Shirley was about 4-5 years of age they took her to Royal Park and entered her in a race for underprivileged kids and for years the staff used to brag about how fast she was. Every time we had a picnic there were races for each age group and for years Shirleys age group was run combined with Girls and Boys and they would boast that Shirley had beaten the Boys. Shirley could also beat my age group and I was 16 months older and I wasn't exactly slow as I used to run in the relays at the inter school sports at High School. **SO DOES THIS SOUND AS THOUGH SHIRLEY WAS DEFORMED! I REST MY CASE!!**

**I BELIEVE THAT THESE REPORTS WERE WRITTEN BY OVER EDUCATED IDIOTS!!!**

So we were left in the **CARE** of these **MONGREL BASTARDS AND WE WERE SUPPOSED TO END UP UNSCARRED AND SANE.**

**Mrs Janice Curtis**

**I am the 2<sup>nd</sup> youngest child of the 7 children that were stolen from MR & MRS FRANCIS HENRY CRAWFORD. My name was Janice Crawford.**