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They opened the heavy steel door and dragged him out into the light that took his sight from him the instant it absorbed him. Twenty days in that dungeon with the rats and the seeping water and the occasional beatings from the turnkeys that grew bored with the long cold nights...now there was the public beating to contend with and yet more days and weeks within the confines of the dungeon...he could feel the madness slowly creeping up on him...he almost welcomed it.

They half carried and half dragged him up the steps and into the large annex like room where the whole population awaited with his tormentors in thick silence...the expectancy of blood and cries for mercy like electricity in the air...he was more than determined that all that they would receive was the blood.

He looked about at the faces of the crowd as the tormentors entapped him to the bench...they were all full of fear...yet excitement...it mattered not if they knew him...nor if they liked him...they were afraid with him yet they could hardly contain their lust for blood...his or anyone elses.

Once they had him strapped down the head man stepped forward into the light carrying a heavy bamboo rod about six foot long and the tension grew. Out of the corner of his eye from his position on the bench he could see the layer of sweat

that covered the sick bastards upper lip...he could see the gleam in the bastards eyes and the sickly smile there within those sick cesspools...he shuddered as the mongrel with the rod began to speak...

"You have ran for the last time from this place young man...now you must be punished...you will then be returned from whence you came for a period detiremind by myself and my fellow heads of staff...ready him now".

Two men walked to his side and tore the clothing from his body leaving him naked upon the bench...stapped face down and bent over so that his behind faced the animal with the bamboo rod.

The animal spoke again as he positioned himself at the rear of the young man..."You are to recieve twenty strokes young man...are you ready"?

The young man didn't answer...a mixture of hatred and fear had taken his voice.

'CRACK'...the first blow fell...drawing blood immediately. The young man bit into his tongue as he felt the blood running down the backs of his legs. 'CRACK'...the second blow fell...splitting the skin once again. 'CRACK'...yet another blow and yet more blood...the young man bit back the cries of indescribable pain as blow after blow fell upon him...somewhere in the distance he heard someone yell the number 10.

"You seem to be determined not to allow your pain to show young man...you obviously feel that this will impress the population but cry you will...you must believe that".

The rod of bamboo whistled through the air once again and smashed into the young mans behind with such force that it pushed the young man and the bench forward...again and again the rod whistled...only now it was landing upon the young mans back and splitting the skin.

"Cry you filthy little mongrel...you will cry or I'll beat you to within an inch of your life"...somewhere off into the distance the young man could faintly hear another voice screaming "He's had enough...the twenty strokes are over"...yet the rod kept falling...

He awoke in darkness. Every fibre of his being was screaming for mercy and the pain was more than he could bare. He realised that once again he was back in the dungeons and was at least thankful to be alone so that he could at last cry...he hoped and prayed that he didn't scream or cry out in pain before he had last consciousness before the end of the beating...he didn't want to give that animal the satisfaction of defeating him.

The days and nights passed slowly with the only contact he had with other people being the nurse twice a day and his meals being thrown into the dungeon...the nurse had said something about trying to get him moved from the dungeon to

the loft so that his wounds may have some chance of healing without the infections of the dungeon...this never came to pass.

After what seemed like a lifetime they came during the night and dragged him out of the dungeon and back into the large annex like room and to the showers at the back where they threw him under the water and told him to get his shit together and get cleaned up...the punishment was over for now. From there they took him to an upper cell where they gave him a blanket and a bible...he was told that the nurse would see him in the morning...they laughed as they slammed the door and walked away...the young man shuddered and began to walk the stiffness out of himself...he could still feel the blood and puss running down the backs of his legs.

Many days passed and he healed slowly but surely. He exercised whenever he could between the occasional visits from the nurse and the turnkeys who threw his meals to the floor and laughed at him...his hatred grew stronger and stronger with each day...he knew what he had to do.

One morning the door was opened and before him stood the animal...Froggy Lewis. You will be allowed to rejoin the population today young man and I sincerely hope that you have learnt your lesson...with that he turned and walked away...leaving a pile of clothing in the doorway...the young man shook with hatred.

He had been back into the population for twenty four hours when the turnkeys called his name... "You have a visit arsehole...not a word about the punishment you received or about the home".

He walked stiffly down the catwalk and into the visiting area...still he could feel the blood from his wounds seeping through his clothing...he sat down at one of the tables and waited.

"Happy Birthday son".

He looked up and before him stood his mother...for the first time in three years his mother was there and the tears flowed down his face.

"How does it feel to be a whole thirteen...a real young man"?

He looked into her eyes and saw the sadness there...he stood up in front of her...the only words that he could find to say... "Go home Mom...please go home and leave me alone"...he turned and walked from the room...the last his mother saw of him for many years were his blood soaked shirt and shorts.

That night the young man was removed from the Boys Home to a maximum security gaol for attacking the animal with a knife...he spent eighteen months locked in a cell and a small yard before he was released into his grandmothers custody...

Today that young man is serving time once again in a maximum security prison...he hasn't forgiven...and he never will...that young man is me!

NOTHING FAST HERO PLEASE MATE! x

That is simply one incident that I had to survive in that place...there were gang wars that were instigated by the staff members for their amusement and many many more unspeakable atrocities performed against the children that were incarcerated within that hell on earth...from the old folks home across the road one could sit and hear stories from the old folk and the nurses of screams in the middle of the night...from children obviously being mistreated...it was something that they complained of having to live with night after night...their calls to the police were never answered...obviously.

It all began way before then naturally enough...it really began on that cold and wet April morning of the 23rd in the year 1948..

The first year was pretty normal I guess...at least I know that I still had both a mother and a father. The second year I can remember with some clarity and it began to get rough...I knew that there were problems because they were forever yelling at each other but I had no idea of why or of what it all had to do with me...and it had to have had something to do with me because I was being tossed about a fair bit...which naturally got me to my feet pretty early I guess...I must have been walking for weeks before either of

them ever noticed it...a survival skill that I had learnt so that I could get out of the way whenever they were together in the same room. There seemed to be long periods of time when the house would be full of peace and happiness and I later learnt that this was because the old man was away...he was a seaman...which...looking back on the situation...was a bonus for all concerned...me in particular. That guy didn't like my being around him at all...something that I could never understand...after all...I smiled a lot and learnt not to shit my pants in front of him and I called him 'Daddy' with every chance I got...I desperately wanted to please this man...because regardless of the slaps across the head that I got and the slaps that my Mother got...I really did love him and wanted him to know that. I quickly learnt that crying wasn't on in the house as well...being thrown around the place like a rag doll and being locked in those evil cupboards...for a whole day at times...soon gets through to you that you are doing something that is really pissing them off something chronic...I took a punt on the fact that it was my crying and as it turned out I was right on the money...pretty soon I had new lessons to learn. The one that really stands out was that I had to eat my vegies. That lesson came a little harder than most because of the way that it was taught I guess. I would be sat at the right hand of my Father and every now and then I would have a fork stuck into my leg with the reminder that I would eat the vegies...now I wasn't going to cry...no way I was going back

into that cupboard...there were monsters in there that would hurt me...I knew that well enough because they had told me so and the time that I did spend in there was spent curled up into a ball in one of the corners...like I said...there was no way I was going back into that...but I wasn't in any hurry to eat those greens either...which meant that I was copping heaps of the fork in the leg. The end result of my taking that attitude was that the fork came on harder and harder untill such times as it drew blood and when that happened I'd get flogged for being an idiot...naturally enough I ended up loving my vegies and even today demand a heaped plate of them. My third year was an all time classic...one that I will never forget for a couple of good reasons. I remember that my old man was at sea and my grandfather had turned up to fix something on the roof...I was out in the yard playing at the time and every now and then he would call to me and when I'd look up he'd wave or poke his tongue out at me which would buckle me up in sheer joy. Anyway...there I was playing contentedly and the next thing I know there's my grandfather laying in front of me flat on his back...now I thought that was his best trick to date and screamed with laughter while he moaned and groaned for my enjoyment...thats the way that it seemed to me at the time anyway. One thing led to another and then the old girl extracted herself from the footpath out the front where she had been flapping her gums with the gum flapper from next door and turned up to take in the situation and then began

*Grandpa*



screaming. Well...as you can well imagine...I'd heard her scream before and it wasn't something that I enjoyed for all the obvious reasons...it normally meant a smack in the head...or worse still...that bloody cupboard! All sorts of weird things began to happen...this bloody van type vehicle turned up with flashing lights and a sound that scared the shit out of me...two blokes came through the door carrying a bed and knocked me arse over head in the process headed out the back to where my grandfather was still moaning and groaning...then they came charging back through the house missing me this time but with my grandfather on the bed...shot him into the back of the bloody van and took off down the road...I figured it was all a part of the days entertainment...the old girl had quietened down some but not me...I yelled with laughter...and I can tell you...I never once laughed at my grandfather again. The old girl got hold of the jug cord and layed into me with it...and the more that I yelled and cried about it the more I got...I spent two whole days locked up in the cupboard with the monsters after that...and the monsters were almost welcome. I learnt much later...from my grandfather...that he had fell from the roof and broke his back that day...I could never tell him what part of me had been broken...I loved him far too much.

My old man arrived home full of piss and good will. He took me...one bright and sunny day...to his ship to show me off to his mates...he held me by the ankles over the edge of the gangway and that really put the fear of the unknown into me

and like a bloody big sock I did a fair amount of yelling and screaming with a little crying thrown in just to balance things out a bit. The end result of that was that I was flogged on the spot for making a fool of him and taken home to be thrown at my Mothers feet...I must have been pretty flexible in those days because I remember bouncing a few times...both in front of my Mother and past her...I can still see the look of surprise in her eyes as I bounced on by. I didn't dare cry again...in spite of having the odd pain or two because now the old girl was pissed off as well and I knew that the cupboard was only a tear away. They flew into each other and as always he won the fight by a knockout...the words that stick in my mind even today...and I can still hear his voice as though he were right here in my cell beside me...were..."you keep that bastard as far away from me as you can get him...I hate him...he's no son of mine". Now for me that didn't mean jackshit...even though I knew what he was on about...I stayed right where I had landed and didn't dare make a sound and felt his glare burn right through to my soul and I still have the scar that it left...I can still feel it. He turned and walked out of the house never to return. My Mother picked herself up looking like death warmed up...took one look at me and left her own scars with that look...somehow the jug cord magically appeared into her hand and I was flogged with it yet again...I don't know how long she planned to leave me in with the monsters that time but the door flew open and there

stood my grandfather and grandmother. I spent the two best years of my life under their care and never once was a finger raised in anger at me. Just after my fifth birthday my Mother appeared out of nowhere and there I was...sat up in the back of a car looking at the back of her head and some mans head. I remember a huge fight between her and my grandparents and she obviously won it because here I was headed for who knows where with her and this man that I was told was my new 'Daddy'.

I spent most of the first few days being pushed out of the way and being told to piss off outside where I belonged while they got on with their lives. They seemed to spend a lot of their time in bed...which was a great deal more than I was allowed to do. I would be woken up and dressed...given some breakfast and pushed out the door into the backyard or to school...depending on what time they got out of bed...if it was school it was a blessing...if it was the backyard then I would be there for the whole day with instructions to amuse myself and to stay out of trouble...have you any idea how difficult it can be to spend days in a backyard and stay out of trouble...let me tell you...it ain't bloody easy...at least it never was for me. I used some old timber and stuff in the yard to build a cubbyhouse and my new 'Daddy' decided that I was some sort of smartarse and used a pretty big stick to beat the shit of my head with for not asking if I could use the junk. He turned out to be something of a character this new 'Daddy' of mine...he was

right into the discipline trip and would spend hours and days waiting on me to screw up so that he could pounce upon me...as it turned out it became something of a sport I guess...me trying to dodge the bastard and his trying to trap me...some kids had old men that were into football and shit like that...I had to have another one that was into teaching me lessons on how bloody big and tough he was. A couple of years went by in this turds company...he even got a job once and that was pretty good because that meant that the old girl had to get up early which meant that I got to go to school each day just like a normal type kid my age. It didn't last nearly long enough because the turd ended up getting the bullet for some reason or another that I could never really find out but it changed my life back to what was the norm for me. Not long after that he hit the piss even heavier than he had in the past and hit the old girl even heavier than that...which meant that somewhere along the line I was going to pay the price and I did...I was too big to re-join my friends in the cupboard...either that or she had forgot to pack the bastards...so I spent days and nights out in the yard for a while after that. One day he got pretty brave and beat the shit of the old girl for some reason and then beat the shit out of me because...having had enough of the lump of shit...I attacked him with a lump of wood from behind. As I remember it I didn't get to make too much of an impression upon the bastard but he sure as hell made one on me...I woke up in Woollongong hospital with

plaster and everything...now that was going to impress the kids at school...if ever I got to get back there again. I'd been there for a while and was lapping it up...those Ladye spoilt me rotten. One day...as was her habit...the old lady turned up out of nowhere and the next thing I knew there I was...on a train bound for Newcastle. She never spoke to me for the whole journey and that suited me just fine...my mind was on seeing my grandparents again...besides...the look in her eyes was enough to keep my mouth shut and my arse glued to the seat. I never did find out what happened to my ex new 'Daddy' but I hoped that he wasn't dead...I prayed that he was suffering somewhere...somehow...comes to that...I still do.

The time spent with my grandparents wasn't as long as I obviously would have liked it to have been but at least I got to go to school for a while and I knew that I was safe from my old girl and her boyfriends...it was my uncles...my old girl's brothers that became the problem. They lived with my grandparents...mainly because neither of them would work under hypnosis and nobody else would have the mongrels and that was pretty unfortunate for me...they were both child molesters...and I just happened to be a child at the time. The fact that I was their sisters son didn't deter them in any way so for the couple of years that I spent there I had to contend with them tampering with me...mentally and physically. I couldn't tell my grandparents because I was deeply afraid that they wouldn't believe me and I was deeply

afraid that my uncles would carry out their threats against me.

One day I arrived home from school and there she was...my old girl had returned. She had a new boyfriend with her and proceeded to inform me that I had yet another new 'Daddy'...my grandparents...to their credit...put up a pretty good fight and even threatened her with the Child Welfare Department and the choice was eventually thrown back into my lap...I considered it for a fair while and when I lifted my eyes and saw my two uncles looking at me from across the room I knew that I would prefer to be beaten to death than to go through what they had in mind for me...I went with my Mother and broke my grandparents hearts...I never could tell them why I made that decision that day and they died without knowing.

Things went quiteley for a time but they were both drinking heavily and were getting into some pretty distasteful behaviour in front of the other children and I so I withdrew and spent most of my time out in the yard or running the streets and stealing to survive...they never asked me where I had been or what I was up to and I didn't bother telling them. I was caught by the police breaking into a place one night and they took me back to the police station and then went and got my old girl who proceeded to beat the shit out of me right there before them...they didn't bother to stop her...not even when she dragged me out to the car where my

new 'Daddy' took over the beating and decided to smash my head into the car door a few times...that probably wouldn't have been too bad except for the fact that the door was opened at the time and he was using the leading edge of the door to re-arrange my head. They got me home and it was on again...I was flogged black and blue and then locked in the shed and was told that I would be staying there untill such times as she could arrange to have me sent to my old mans parents.

I was duly sent to live in Adelaide with my old mans parents and whenever my old man was about I was totally ignored. The grandparents were too old to be chasing after me but they did ensure that I got to school which pleased me no end...I wasn't much of a student but I did enjoy being there. During the times that the old man would be home from the sea he never spoke to me once and it was left to the old people to contend with me. It wasn't long before I was out on the streets again and into trouble with the law...in Adelaide that sort of behaviour and having no parents to speak of meant only one thing...Magill Reformatory...it was to mean the beginning of the end for me only I didn't know that then...if I had known I would have undoubtably taken my own life. It has been said that Foresight would be a wonderful thing...I can only agree.

Magill was once an old fort and it stands within the magical beauty of the Adelaide hills...I guess they must have been

thinking that they could get away with their murders and beatings upon the Australian youth if they situated it properly. And they did...on both counts.

I wont bother to impart all that happened in that unwholesome place...suffice to say that our so called Cream Of The Australian Manhood has a lot to answer for...I'm talking about the turnkeys here...the molesters...murderers and torturers of children sent to a reformatory to have their behaviour corrected...the creators of monsters that society refused to accept amongst their numbers...their own children. I've seen children raping children and the turnkeys stand around laughing...I've seen children stabbing children and the turnkeys stand around laughing...I've seen children murdered and beaten with lumps of wood and with iron bars and yes...the turnkeys stood around laughing...we were their sport.

I remember that the children were made to form a team to play football in the annex and the team that they had to play were the turnkeys. At one end of the annex stood a bank of steel lockers and at the other end there were tables and chairs...the sides of the annex were lined with wooden benches and the floor was polished timber. We had to play in shorts...no shirts and no shoes...they played in shorts...shirts and gym shoes. During one of these matches I was up against the Annex Master and I had the ball...I ducked and weaved around the turd more for survival than the



desire to win the game...unfortunately he had the reach on me and got hold of me by the throat and threw me to the floor...I got up to play the ball and he picked me up over his head and threw me yet again...this time through the air and into the lockers. The end result was that I had a broken wrist...a badly gashed head and two broken ribs. I was sent to the Dungeons...fourteen days for Self Inflicted Wounds...and I can say...quite honestly...that for once I was glad to be there.

Work in the place consisted of a Motor Shop that did the work on the cars belonging to the turnkeys...a Carpenter Shop that built the furniture for the place...they got plenty of work because chairs were forever being smashed over the heads of the children and the heads of the children were constantly being smashed into tables. There was the Odd Job Line and that was the place to be...it meant that you went outside and worked and if you went outside to work then there was always the chance that you wouldn't have to go back to The Castle. It took some time but finally I got onto that Line and there was no doubt in my mind that there would be no returning should I be picked to go out on one of the jobs. The day came when I was picked...along with a few others...and that was probably one of the happiest days of my life. I kept my head down so that they couldn't see what was in my eyes and shuffled out to climb into the back of the truck with the others...we had no idea of where we were going but it didn't matter. We were soon mobile and it was

down through the suburb of Magill I looked to see who was sat next to me on the back of the truck and it was a boy from Victoria who would...in later years become a pretty good mate...

"I'm going to bolt mate...cover my arse will you"?

"I'm going to be with you pal so you say when".

I waited to see where we were and when the truck went through the other side of the city and turned towards the Port area I was grinning...we were right down near the rail yards and Adelaide Gaol...that was good enough for me.

I was up and over the side of the truck and cutting through the traffic...beside me was the Victorian and we made it into the Rail Yards and I looked over my shoulder...about half a dozen kids were running directly at us and the truck was stopped in the middle of the road...we put on the pace and lost ourselves in amongst all the trains and carriages...all the time we could hear the turnkey screaming at the others to find us and drag us back to him. They never did find us...in fact that arsehole of a turnkey lost more than two of us that day...those that were supposed to be looking for us ran past us going like the wind. It was a good and a magic day...the Victorian and I shook hands and went our separate ways...we both knew that we had to get into some good cover as the police would be all over the place and I knew exactly where I was going and what I

wanted...it was time for my old man to pay the bills...and I wanted my clothes.

I hid away in old houses and bushland during the daylight hours and did what had to be done at night. I had to eat and I had to have clothes so I broke into shops and got all that I needed...when the time was right and things had gone quite I would get to my old man and to my own clothes but for the first couple of weeks it was a matter of keeping a low profile...it was a glorious time and I even had a radio to listen to...compliments of one of the shops...I had gathered a little bank and was more than just a little content.

One night I decided that it was time to go and get my own things and to take the old mans car...I knew where he kept the keys to it and I prayed that he was away at sea...I knew that the house was never locked...soon I would be home in New South Wales and free forever. I took a couple of hours to get to Rosewater Gardens and by the time that I made it all of the street lights had gone out and that was what I wanted. I got to the house and crept down the yard to the back door and let myself in and crept into the kitchen and found what I wanted...the keys...then I went to what used to be my room and began gathering my clothes...and the lights went on. My old man stood there in the doorway glaring at me...he grabbed me and punched me and then dragged me out to the shed where he really gave me a hiding...not a word was spoken during all of this and I woke up in darkness. I got

off the ground and felt my way around and realised that I was locked in the shed...outside I could hear voices and began trying to find a way out but it was too late...the

the house

bastard had called the police...

I was handcuffed and led away to the police car...I glared at the old man and he glared right on back and I was taken past him. They took me to Port Adelaide and questioned me for quite a while and thumped me once or twice before throwing me into a cell. The daylight came all too quickly and I knew that I would be taken into court and re-sentenced back to Magill...my real problems were about to begin...

Upon my return to 'The Castle' I was greeted by The Animal and knocked to the ground and kicked about the foyer...the coppers stood by passively and watched it all happen. The Animal called out the names of two turnkeys who grabbed me and dragged me down to the dungeons where the two turnkeys began their little square-up...it was soon over and I knew that I would be left there for some time to come...there would be a public beating and a few turnkeys paying me visits during the many long nights of my stay there...I was back...without question.

MANY MANY TIMES I have began writing this...the anger becomes so much that I lose it altogether. Now I find that to write it properly I must just sit here and let it flow as though I were sitting here talking to you one on one. I can not say that I hate my Father...I didn't know him that well. I know that as a child...age three...that I was terrified of him. How could I not be...when a fully grown man will sit there and dig a fork into the leg of a baby boy and scream at him from the beginning of dinner till the end...he is going to earn a great deal of fear. When the same man will drag the same child from his bed for crying and slap him about the head and body and throw the child to the floor...then its a pretty safe bet that the child concerned is going to be absolutely terrified of that man. He was a seaman and quite proud of it...he often had his mates home and had my Mother wait on them hand and foot. I remember his taking me to the ship and being greeted by ~~by~~ his mates who were all standing on deck looking down at us...half way up the gangway my Father grabbed me by the scruff of the neck and held me over the side...I was so scared that I wet myself...the end result was that I was flogged on the spot and immediately taken home...and...upon arrival...he flung the door open and threw me at my Mothers feet. I never saw him again after that untill many years later but that same fear of him was still there...he spat in my face and told me to stay away from him...something that was pretty hard to do considering I was living in the same house with him in the

care of his Mother...my Grandmother. My Mother...after my Father left...moved from place to place...relationship to relationship...but somehow we always ended up back in Newcastle where I always lived with my Mothers Mother. I loved my Gran very very deeply...just as I did my Grandfather and there was just no way that I could find to tell them that their two sons were molesting me...that began when I was aged eight or nine and continued until my Mother arrived back with a man and said that it was my new Father...I wouldn't and couldn't accept that and she sent me back to live in Adelaide with my Father and his Mother... something that I can still feel the horror of. I was allowed a great deal of freedom there...mainly because nobody cared if I was there or not. I ran the streets and began stealing cars and breaking into houses...not going home or to school. Eventually I into trouble with the law and for a youth of eleven or twelve there was only ever one outcome in court... especially when there was no family to speak for you... ..yes... the family members are informed...and...in the main...they decline to appear...you were then sent to a reformatory. Reformatories in the early 1960's were breeding grounds for todays criminals...just as todays reformatories are the breeding grounds of tomorrows criminals...they taught you how to be better thieves...how to be more violent. The main lessons that were learnt were the lessons of hatred and bitterness...how not to trust or feel anything...regardless of who or what it was...you learnt to

mentally turn your back,..yet look them in the eye...always knowing what was coming at you. Maggill was a reformatory like nothing that you'd ever believe could exist in this... the modern age...but exist they do...right now...today... while you sit there in your comfortable chair with your coffee and your cigarette...a monster is in the process of being created. The monster may break into your house... steal your car...assault and rob you...he may even kill you...or a hell of a lot worse. The creators are what you would call "the cream of the crop", our countries best...so called 'highly trained staff'...they are trained in how to overcome the boredom of their daily grind by beating the shit out of those kids...by torturing them both mentally and physically. No, you dont believe me...thats fine...honestly it is...lets just hope and pray that your children or your grandchildren never have to suffer what I am telling you because you are too blind to see...because you lack the depth to percieve...to feel. I went into a dormitory that was on the top floor of the reformatory...it was there... for the first time...that I saw people dive to their death through windows that had not bars nor glass. Those boys had had all that they could take...their bodies and minds were at the end of their tethers...it was a case of survive the jump and perhaps still be able to get away...or die...there was...naturally...another option...isn't there always?..they could always be maimed or disfigured for life...some were. Seeing this happen wasn't a rare thing...most every other

night it happened...we would lay there night after night afraid to sleep...waiting for the most horrible scream a human could ever hear...the scream of a child dying. I remember the day that the screws took a half a dozen boys on a work detail to the front of the building...a couple of hours later those same boys came back...very very scared and very pale. They had just been made to bury pointed stakes into the garden at the front of the building...right below the dorm windows...they had also been told to say nothing to anyone because they...the screws...had bets on to see who would be the first out the windows after the stakes being put in place...I was one of the boys that had put the stakes in...I was also the one to spread the word about it back in the annex where we were all kept. That night a couple of the kids gave it their best shot...assuming that if they pushed out far enough then they would miss the gardens altogether...they were wrong...one boy missed the stakes altogether...he crushed his legs upon impact...the other two didn't miss...one had a stake go through his leg...lengthways...the other boy copped one through the shoulder and one through the neck. For my part...in talking to the rest of the boys about it...I was thrown into the dungeons for a fortnight and then caned before the whole population...such is the value of youth... and...of life. I've had a lifetime of that style of life...Boys Homes and Prisons...people dying...being tortured physically and mentally...gang wars and murders...rapes and bashings...and



not all of it being on the crime side...screws have taken a large part in these things...a very large part.

I've learnt my lessons well...too bloody well...hatred and bitterness are a major part of my life/

No 4

~~Philip Ad~~  
I'M UNSURE

BOB WAS IN HIS MID TEENS AT THIS TIME.  
(WHEN I READ N91, MAYBE IT WAS AT THAT TIME, ABOUT 13 YRS. OLD)  
Buttons.....we all know about buttons, we got em on our shirts,

on our duds, on our coats and even on bloody pullovers.....yeah, you know the things I'm on about, little round bizzo's with bloody holes in them, they are a part of our every day life....but how many of you actually know buttons, I mean, actually know the little dudes, how many of you people have actually had the good fortune to have actually had an air tight relationship with a bloody good old fashion four holed button.....dont be laughing, this is the ridgye didge acticle I'm talkin here.

I have had such a relationship...yeah, me, I admit it, in fact I'm bloody proud of it, a fair dinkum little four holed button off a shirt, we had this thing going for a full twenty eight days this button and I, I remember it well that little button, nice and smooth, rounded to perfection, and playfull, man that button was prbably more playfull than a puppy and more lively than a can of worms, I really loved that little button, it was everything in the world to me, and even today, I fondly recall it's light green color, it was beuatiful, and was a certain saviour to me during a trying and stressfull period of time, twenty eight days to be exact, .....not very long for a meaningfull relationship you might very well say, but that short period of time was like a million years to me at the time, and that button, that extremely beautiful button, saved me from sure insanity.

It was back in the early 60's at Long Bay Gaol, in the time of the dreaded "Dark Peter".....the "Black Hole"....otherwise known as the "Punishment Cell", the "Lock Up", I had just been busted for being a naughty little prisoner by "Big Jim" the chief of the dayand gave him some for his corner, he shakes his head and tells me to follow him down to the Supers Office , so me being me, I keep running off at the "north 'n' south" and follow him down, telling the jerk what he can do with his cute little rule book, and the gaol right along with it, by the time we get to the destination of his desire he is foaming at the mouth like the rabid dog that he is and screaming something about my being finished in his gaol, I have a bit of a grin and have these glorious visions of the old F.100 Escort Van travelling down the highway towards Maitland, with me in the back having a smoke and a sing, he goes off into the Supers office and leaves me standing there to enjoy my dream while he goes for a cry on Robbo's shoulder, Robbo just happens to be the big boss, and is as sharp as a bowling ball, and thats on a good day.

Next thing I know "Big Jim", or "Dorris" as he was affectionately known as; to his workmates, screams me into the office, I roll in with a grin and prop in front of the Supers desk and have a look around, nothings changed since last week, cluttered desk, worn old brown carpet, probably stolen, bars on his windows, so that we cant get in to clock the mongrel whenever he decides he wants to change the rules, a picture of the good old Queen Mother behind him on the wall, and best of all, his skinny little "lemon spread" is still there growling at me like a dirty little undernourished rat, well, he screams and spits for a while, something about how he hates my guts and that he is going to be the death of me and that I cant be telling his officers to go f..k enselves and all that sort of thing that is common place in this place, I dont make any comments, just grin at him untill he cant take it any more, then the bastard screams "Seven Days Carpenter, and then back to me for another seven, and then back for another seven, and on it will go untill .....

So there you go, thats how it began, I didn't bother saying anything to the dirty unwashed little arsehole because there was no point, and there is no way that this maggott "Big Jim" will ever hear an apology from me, there you go, I'm outside the dreaded "Dark Peter", being totally stripped and searched, ever been searched while you've been bare arsed naked...let me tell you, it's a very personal affair, and certainly not to be taken lightly, especially in the winter, which it is right now.....I cop the search, and the sly touch up without a flinch, I pick up my clothing, ripping off a button from my shirt as I do so, and hand it to the sweeper, I keep the button tightly in my hand as the outer door of the cell opens and wait for the fool to open up the inner door, inside it's black, and bloody cold beyond your wildest dreams, or at least, it seems that way from outside.

The screws grab me, bare arsed, and throw me in, yelling the rules as I smash against the back wall.....they all sound pissed off about my being there but I know thats shit, they are as happy as pigs in shit.

The doors crash closed one at a time, I have a bit of a rest against the back wall and adjust to the place, cant even see the hand I'm holding out in front of me, or am I holding it out, stuffed if I know.....get the mind set and feel the button in the hand, it's around ten in the morning, so all I have to do is keep track of the meals and sleeps that pass by and I'm set for life, and everyone knows that they give you your bedding at night...not a problem, set back and enjoy it.

I run the button around my fingers a bit and get the feel of it, I dont give that old button a great deal of thought there, not being nasty towards it, but hell, it is only a button isn't it, so I throw it against the wall, wait to hear it come to rest, and then go find it.

On my hands and knee's I crawl around that cell, feeling for the button, all over the cell, trying not to miss an inch of it, finally, success, I have it in my hand.....and then I throw it again, bounce it off the back wall, I think, and wait, when there is total silence, the search begins again.....on and on for hours.....the walk from corner to corner for a while, for what also seems to be hours, untill I hear the faint jingle of the keys outside, I quickly put the button under the tongue, maybe they'll search, maybe they wont, but the button is staying, either way.....the doors open and I get against the back wall, the voice tells me that it's dinner, I missed lunch because they forgot, and that sounds reasonable to me, no big deal, they throw in the bedding, a bit of foam rubber and a blanket, you beaut, some old home style comfort for the poor naughty little prisoner, the bugger of a kid that he is, but dont worry, they will teach him some manners, they will change his ways, they will kill him with kindness and attention, not a problem.

Eat the meal with the "onkerparingas" because you aint got no fighting gear, stash the plates at the doors edge, right against the doors edge, that way, if you are asleep, and the mongrels sneak in to give you a bit of a tickle, they are going to screw up, they ring the alarm, tin dixies have a tendency to make noise, thats whats so good about them, having done all that, throw the button, wait for the silence that you know must follow, and go look for it, and keep repeating the process untill you are too tired to bother, the pace up and down, corner to corner,

Sleep, I was asleep, now whats happening, and the answer soon becomes obvious, painfully so, the boot in the ribs tells me that some bastard wants me of the bedding, but I'm still tired, I know that I only just got to sleep, boots have a way of getting your head straight, especially when one of the bastards is trying it's best to fit into your ear, I get my arse into gear and clear that space but only to bump into something, or someone.....whack up the side of the head, hard heavy object, a batton, another mongrel screw, someone is yelling at me to get up, so up I get and hit the wall, I hear noises behind me and then stillness, next thing I know I'm on the deck again, with a blinding pain running up my spine, the maggot has used the batton again.....as they leave one of them tells me that breakfast is there and to be carefull where I put the plates next time...well I can be telling you this, I was real carefull, this time I'll stand them up against the door, they arn't going to slide quiteley like that.

Throw the button, find the button, on and on, pace up and down, and go after that button some more, have a meal, throw the button, find the button, pace up and down, meals come and meals go, no idea of time or days, just throw the button, find the button, be flogged, and be searched, have meals and throw the button, find the button.....the button, the most important object in your life, sleep, eat, pace, throw the button, find the button, sleep, throw the button, find the button, sleep, throw the button, find the button, nothing else matters now.

The door opens and something is thrown in, I hear the words that follow and realise it's my clothes, I get dressed as you are told and then you step out the door, the light is blinding, they head towards the bottom landing and into the shower block, they throw a towel and a lump of soap, which, due to the light, you dont see coming, picking them up it's into the shower and man, it feels magic, you get out and dressed, they head for the Supers office and I follow, I wave at the yells as I go accross the compound towards the office block, following these two turds, into the office and straight into the Supers den, he gives me some dirty looks over his glasses and tells me he's waiting for me to apolegise, all I could do was laugh, he screams for the turds to put me back where they got me, which suits me fine, I need to find the button.

So hear I am, twenty eight days on, and on an escort to Maitland, having a smoke for the first time in a month, and telling my mate, the button, just how wonderfull it is, I've had a few floggings in that time, and felt only some of them, all the time with the button in my hand, I've slept with the button in my hand, I've had some extremely in depth conversations, with the button in my hand, and to the button personally.....today, that button is coming with me to Maitland, in time I'm going to see to it that this button lives at NOBBY'S BEACH, where it can watch the surf and feel the sea breeze in it's face, feel the warmth of the days and the cool of the night, know total freedom and rejoice in being out of the hell it is now a part of.

Right now, in 1989, the button, is set into the concrete of the pavillion at NOBBY'S BEACH, overlooking the sea, I wonder if it wonders about me.....