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To whom it may concern,

I am writing this short letter of my institutionalisation of government and state run institutions over a period of my childhood from age eleven to fifteen. I have copies of a verbal account of being brought to Bidura which is self explanatory. I was also placed in the girls shelter at Glebe Linwood Hall Parramatta Girls Home and Hay. I was fourteen years old when I was transferred to Hay after previously being in isolation, segregation and at Parramatta admission for three months. I was involved in the Parramatta riots but I was one of the younger girls so therefore I could not be charged and taken to Long Bay. I did not know at the time that you had to be over sixteen. Myself and another girl were the first to get on the roof at Parramatta which was to escape the brutal bashing we knew we would get for leaving the laundry. Mr Johnson was then in charge. He was a brutal man and within that week I had seen him back and kick a girl that he had been molesting to try and induce a miscarriage. I still carry the horror of that incident in my mind as it went on for thirty minutes. Her name was Barbara Price we tried to escape and because we couldn't make it to the gate the other alternative was to go to the schoolhouse roof. Johnson was called and we had our audience as the schoolhouse was full and the sewing room and kitchen looked onto the school house.

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I knew that I would be flogged but because I was on the roof I decided to out him and verbally screamed that I knew what he was doing to Barbara. You must understand that it was a secret that everyone knew about but no one spoke about because of the fear of this man. Whilst I was on the roof I screamed that he would take girls to his ~~house~~ on the, pretense that they were there for cleaning and in reality he was abusing the girls sexually. I screamed that it disgusted me as he was the worst abuser there at the time he said he was going to kill us and tried to climb onto the roof. I realised that I could break the tiles loose I did this to protect myself and try to keep away from him. I threw tiles at him and the girls cheered which gave us courage. He negotiated with two older girls from Emerson and Jedda Lowe to talk us down because he didn't want to call the fire Brigade. A compromise was reached that if we came down we would not be flogged but would receive 72 hours of isolation so we agreed to come down. He sang out that we wouldn't be touched when we came down it was roll call time we walked past all the girls that were being checked off the roll Bev tripped and fell over and I laughed with nerves. He Mr Johnson ran at me with a closed fist the girls seeing this took a few steps forward saying to him "Don't touch her".

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At that moment I saw fear in his eyes and he dropped his fist and said he wouldn't touch us. He took us to isolation and locked us up. Those hours I spent in isolation I thought about what we had done and that we had all come together ^{girl} as I was sick of all the baskings the poor food the conditions and the brutality of Johnson and Gordon and that if we stuck together and in the future we would be a force to be reckoned with and would receive better conditions and treatment I put this to the older girls when I was released and that was how the riots began. The daily ritual of floggings as for minor rule breaches was reported by an officer and girls were sent up top which was the covered walkway and minor breaches were treated by the officers with a flogging on most days it would be up to twenty girls. We would say to each other "try not to cry" "Don't let the bastards see you cry" I remember standing there and trying not to get knocked off my feet as you would then be pulled by the hair and kicked I remember my ears ringing I would try always to look them in the eye once in isolation that is where I would cry. I am fifty six years old and still find it very hard to cry after being involved in the riots

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we were determined not to give up until we could receive a better quality of life and be treated like human beings. The older girls were being sent to Long Bay Gaol they had brought in more male officers Police and Detectives and with this new arrival of men was one officer called Troy he was extremely sadistic and our treatment became a lot harsher and brutal he had the officers cut up the hoses to flog us with I remember a girl Wendy Gray he personally flogged and there were black and red welts across her back from her neck down and she could not straighten up. I could not believe that a man could do this to a little girl she was hunched over for a couple of months I ~~was~~ ^{was} concerned that he had permanently damaged her spine. The officers would keep us awake till two o'clock in the morning scrubbing floors girls would fall over asleep and would eventually be permitted to go to the dormitory with the constant brutality and lack of sleep and food, the threat of isolation and officers who walked around with rubber hoses striking at unlucky girls who happened to be in striking distance. The girls began to mutilate their bodies with razor blades, needles and pins my girlfriend Lynn O'Connor made me cry when she used a razor blade to cut $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep all the way up her leg.

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She told me not to worry that the officers would have to take her ~~the~~ to have it fixed and she would be able to rest awhile. Lyn has multiple scarring on her leg, wrist and arms and I was sure they took her to Long Bay. This outraged me. I decided to try and stop girls from doing this. If girls put safety pins into their breasts and arms and did them up I would get a couple of the girls to hold them down so I could pull them out sometimes with my teeth. I was given the nickname Mar Mar which is short for mother. All those girls were like my sisters we were like a big family. I was put into segregation for three months. I would have an officer bring my food and let me out to shower once a day. The mattress and bedding would be removed in the morning with no wireless or reading material given. Officer would say Don't worry Marlene they are building a special place for you. I didn't care what they were doing. I hated every officer and male person that worked there. To me it was us girls against them. When they hurt one of my friends it was like they were hurting me too.

One night around six thirty it was dark. Three males came to my cell and they wanted me to drink Largactil. I knew that it made you doze off. I had seen this medication prescribed for other girls.

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I refused to have any. They forcibly held me down in my cell and poured the Larcactol down my neck. I fought as much as I could and I could hear the girls saying fight marlene but I couldn't. I was drugged and didn't know what I was doing. I had a male on either side of me escorting me and waking me saying put one foot in front of the other. They took me to a station and kept telling me to lift my feet. They handcuffed me to the seat in the train and all I wanted to do was sleep. I woke up at June Station. I had a real bad headache and could not think straight. There were other people on the train and I am amazed that no-one enquired as to my welfare. We got off the train. A large man with a female escort took charge of me. He knew I had been drugged and was sick. He put me in the front of the van. I needed help to be placed into the van. He told me he was in charge of a new institution called Hay and we drove out of the town. My head was aching and I felt so weak I would not have been able to run away. Once we left town we drove along a main road and as we drove the scenery changed. It was like a desert with a straight road, no houses, no trees. He kept talking, telling me that Hay was an old god and there was tin on the roof, no tiles.

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and there was no escape, and that if you did get out you would die in the desert. The gaol came into focus I could see the high walls and knew that it was a gaol it felt so isolated that I thought I had come to the end of the world as I was unfamiliar with the country we went in through the ~~small~~ big door and there was bars like a proper gaol. The place was still. It looked like it hadn't been lived in in years. It was grey and horrible. The only place that was clean painted was his office. It seemed to me there was no one in the place. He kept talking about the strict rules, saying there was no talking and that I had to keep my eyes down and not to look at anyone and that if I did I would lose half a meal. It was called "a bounce". I heard keys and a man came through the gate and came into the office. He had boots on up to his knees, jodpurs, pants tucked in, short sleeve shirt, very neat and he wasn't perspiring. He had black hair, perfect part with brylcreme, keeping his hair in place. He had the cruellest eyes I had ever seen. He started screaming straight away "on your feet, eyes down" and don't ever look at me again. I got up and stood there. He walked around me telling me that we don't get away with anything here, and they would keep me here for as long as they wanted. I had long wavy hair ringlets on either side of my face. He picked up a ringlet and said "pretty hair" with his other hand behind his back.

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he had a large pair of scissors and he cut my ringlet off. I started to fight him and he pushed me to the ground and started cutting away at my hair. I didn't struggle to much as I was still sick. I knew it was no use fighting but it was one of the most humiliating days of my life. my hair was cut right up around my ears with large chunks visible. he laughed and I thought to myself that he was crazy. he reminded me of Troy. I hated him instantly. I was taken to the cell block and it was a proper cell block with cells. It was dirty it looked like it hadn't be lived in ~~for~~ for years. there was a white wash on the walls. the only thing new about the place was the tin roof. The cell doors had peep holes in them. the doors were iron with big bolts that would lock the doors. I was given a bucket a roll of toilet paper bedding and a night dress. I was placed in the cell with a small table and wooden seat and an single iron bed. and mattress on the floor. I was told to put the bed together and make it and I was told to stand at attention facing the door with my eyes down. if an officer ever came to my cell. He slammed the iron door closed and I could hear the bolt being slammed into place. it was still light enough that I could see and the light had been switched on. the cell was dirty. there was spider webs everywhere. I put the iron bed together and made the bed and cried with humiliation and anger at the inhuman man named Kennedy. later I could hear him scream. I thought to myself that there must be other girls and I felt better. My head was still aching. I realised I was hungry almost half an hour later.

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The door was opened and I got a tray with some food on it. The next morning at six. I could hear him yell again and cell doors being opened. I was told to march out in the cell block with my eyes down with my bucket and toothbrush and we were marched to the shower at the end of the cell block we were to wash, clean our teeth and empty our bucket within a minute. We had to line up again in the cell block six feet apart and do an hour of push up exercise. He walked up and down the line screaming at everyone. When he kicked one of the girls he would laugh. We were then put back into our cells and given breakfast. It was explained to us that we had to speak in a certain way. If we wanted anything we were to put our hand in the air and wait to be spoken to. ^{we} were to say "Report to you sir may I go to the toilet?" we would run on the double and to come back where we started and to say "Report back to you sir." We were told to sleep facing the door. If we turned over we were woken up and told to stand for half an hour and then told to go back to bed. I was woken up every night I was there because I would turn over in my sleep and face the wall. For nine months I never slept a whole night without being woken up. We were told to have three minute showers. no exceptions. If you were longer than three minutes you were given a bounce which meant half a meal. I was given a bucket and scrubbing brush with cold water and told I wasn't allowed out of my cell until I scrubbed the whitewash back to the brick. I knew that other girls had the bucket and water too. As you could hear the girls scream you didn't speak normally. I was still feeling dozey and sick from the Larcachin and I knew other girls had finished to scrubbing and that they were out and I was still in.

Some had finished in three days but I had to stay there for five days as you had to do the ceiling too. It was on the fifth day that I finally finished scrubbing it back to the brick. Kennedy came to my cell and seemed happy to tell me that I would be named "June" now as Marlene Williams had arrived and he couldn't have two Marlenes in the same cell block and I had fought him when he cut my hair. I said "Yes sir Thankyou Mr Kennedy Sir" I knew he expected me to be upset about that but I was determined not to let him have the satisfaction. When I walked out of the cell block I remember being temporarily blinded by the brightness of the sun and almost losing my balance. We were treated like wharfie laborers and remember I was fourteen years old. The eldest girl would have been seventeen. We had to dig up the old footpath that was four foot under the sand. Sift the dirt, be ground sifters dig it over and over and dig truckload of topsoil into it mix cement cement the paths together plant garden and plant lawn and vegetables. While other girls scrubbed walls back to brick and then we painted the cell block and our cells. On our hands and knees we rubbed back wooden floors with sandpaper we never stopped working with this physical hard labour until the lawn's footpath and garden was done. I remember one girl Judy Bridges she was tall and thin very fair and the heat was sometimes 40° she would faint and Kennedy would say to us "pick that skinning bitch up and put her in the shade till she comes ~~through~~ to." Her hands became infected from splinters and her fingers became crooked ~~to~~ even though she was supposed to be treated for them. One of Kennedy's sadistic things that he liked to do

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was to keep us marking time outside the cell block (continually marching) he would stand next to a girl at random and raise his arm straight out screaming for the girl to lift her legs higher as she marked time and as the girl raised her knees he would lift his arm higher until the girl started crying or fell over then he would walk away laughing to say that he broke a lot of girls is an understatement. We had to keep six feet apart at all times and no communication between each other at all. I was placed in isolation. I can't remember the reason but by now I knew the rules and one was that no male officer was allowed in a cell with a girl without a female officer present. I remember I was ill with my periods and you knew the noise of the cell block and that officers would go to the main kitchen at around seven thirty for a coffee break or their dinner in this time there would be one person in charge of the cell block. I knew they were on their break. What I didn't know until Kennedy opened my cell door that it was him. He came in and told me to remove my underclothing and to lay on the mattress. It took me a few moments to comprehend what he meant. I looked for the female officer's legs and recognised that he had intentions of raping me as there was no female officer. I looked him in the eyes and told him to leave my cell. My mind was racing he said to me "You get your pants off or I will rip them off you" I realised at that moment that I had him that if I could keep him in the cell with me he was breaking his own rules and that I might be believed. So I attacked him when he realised that I was keeping him in my cell by fighting him and screaming all the while. I kept screaming he's trying to rape me the other girls were screaming out too. He started whipping me with his whip and trying to leave my cell but I hung onto him with all my strength by this time he had ripped my clothes and I had ripped his shirt.

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The first female officer to come through the grille into the cell block was a lady "Mrs Curtis she was very decent because she was a local woman I was so happy to see her face because I knew that this woman had integrity I knew from her reaction to different things that she did not like Kennedy and the way he treated us girls I ran to her and threw my arms around her I was hysterical and overcome with relief and I told her that he had tried to rape me. The other girls were singing out that he had already raped them at different times A girl that was in the hospital block Judy Golson claimed also that he had raped her the night before and she had just had her appendix out Mrs Curtis screamed at him that if he wasn't sacked she would go to the media I cried for half an hour I could not stop crying I kept saying don't let him near me. The next morning when we were called out ~~the~~ to go to the shower block there was still girls crying and in a very stressed state and I believe that he did rape those girls individually. He was able to work for a further month. we never saw any police it was an internal investigation Mr Maylan came from Sydney to investigate the incident almost a month later we were treated like we were liars but he was removed. I question where did this man go and why weren't the police involved this is a big injustice to me and the other girls I stopped eating for a month I was close to a breakdown. I was eventually sent back to Parramatta and discharged. Mr Kennedy was a predator a psychotic and one wonders why they hired a man like this to supervise young girls.

Marlene Jane Wilson Riley

Marlene J Wilson
