

David's Story as Told by  
his mum, (Dad is Deceased).  
Mary Maher.

Dear sir/madam,

When David was 13 years old, he began to go away for A while on his own but always would come home & we didn't know where he was, but at home he was fine & happy with his Brothers & Sisters. I Remember 1 morning I needed some bread, so I gave David the money to go to the shop & I waited & waited for the Bread which Never came so I had to send someone else for some more Bread. Later in the Afternoon David would come home with no explanations & No money, so then I didn't send him anymore if I could help it as we couldn't afford to pay for things twice. All the children would go to school & I'd give them ALL 15p for the canteen & they were all happy (All 6 of them). David would spend hours up the Back Yard with his Matchbox cars, building roads & happy doing it. One day I Remember David didn't come home from School, he was at High School now, we worried all night, & the police & us couldn't find him, I was in Town with my sister-in-law on the next day, where we found David with 2 Bags of Matchbox cars which he had stole we took him to the Police Station to show them what he had done but they never said anything to him, quite the opposite as 4 weeks later, they brought the cars back to me & they said he could have the cars, (Not a very good way to try & stop someone from shoplifting). Things settled down again for a while, when David went to school one day he was hit by a car & got a Broken Leg, so he was Laid up for 8 weeks.

David was finally back at school, on the following Week-end David took our Dog for a walk & forgot to come home. Later that night a policeman came to the house & said David & the Dog was at the Police Station as David was charged with stealing a Policeman's Son's Pushbike, he went to court & was made a WARD of the state which really broke our hearts, his Dad, myself, Sister & Brothers, grandmother couldn't believe this could happen. We are sure that if the Bike wasn't a Policeman's Son's Bike, he might not have been Dealt with so Harshly. He was placed in a Receiving Home at Penquite Road, Newstead & I noticed clothes missing off my clothes line. & food from the fridge & couldn't work out where it was going this went on for 4 Days until 1 day our Dog was scratching on the Door that goes under the House & there was David hiding under the house, No-one had told us he had Ran away from his Placement, I ran him a Bath, he was so Dirty, he had a mouthful of ulcers, when he was all cleaned up we asked him why he was under the House, he told us he didn't want to go back as he was being ill-treated there, we maybe should've but we kept him with us for another 2 Days, when we Rang the Police to tell them where he was, they came & took him, we Pleaded with them 'to Listen to what David was saying about the Mistreatment he was getting but their comment was 'we Don't CARE', the Next thing we knew he was sent to Wybra Hall at Mangalore, we were allowed to write to him, it was his Birthday on the 17th APRIL, he was 14 years old, so the family All made their way Down to Hobart, there was 4 car Loads of us & off we went. Picked up David on the way & went to

the waterfront, had Ferry Rides & had a picnic Lunch, David wasn't the same happy Boy we all knew, he was so withdrawn & when we got back to Wybra Hall, he was uncontrollably & begged us not to leave him there, we had no idea what was going on in that horrible place, it <sup>was</sup> really emotional to take your child back & then have to drive away, everyone was in tears so it was a heart wrenching experience, what made things worse we tried to get him home, the Welfare contacted me and said that they would probably let David come home in August 1976 but before they finished the conversation, they warned us not to tell David because if we did they wouldn't let him come home. On the morning of 26-7-'76, a Policeman came to our door at 7-30 AM, the Police asked me to get my Husband, we will never forget that morning, he told us that David had been killed in a CAR ACCIDENT at Kempton, he & 2 younger boys apparently broke pens on their hands & while they were in the Bathroom, they escaped through a window, ~~they~~ <sup>broke</sup> into the Mangalore Service Station & stole a car, the Driver was 13 at the time, the other boy was 11, & David was 14, how can you come to terms with the fact, the last memory you have of your son is when we left him behind on his Birthday he was in a Traumatic State & only 3 months later, he is 'Dead'. We went into the Welfare Department at 9-AM & was greeted quite happily by The Head man MR. Jones who asked us how we were & we said how do you think we would feel after being told that one of the children was Dead. They didn't even know which added to our Heart Break. We all dearly loved David & when he was home

with us he was never Abused or hurt & Now we are so Devastated to find out about the Abuse & Torture that happened when David was in Wybra Hall & No-one would Listen to the Children when they told people what was happening, I hope this never happens to Anyone else. My & the ~~Remaining~~ Remaining family's theory is if these Boys weren't being abused, they wouldn't have escaped & stolen the car that crashed killing our Son & Brother & maybe he would still be here with us today, The Last word I have to say Regards me Beamish & all the other Wybra Hall workers (Dead or ALive) I hope they Rot in Hell!!!

Kind Regards.

MRS. Mary Maher.

P.S. why can't we get Justice for this????  
26/1/05.

David's Story, (Part 2)  
As Told by his sister  
Patricia Brown.

To whom it may concern,

David & I were close as he was only 14 months older than me, we had a good family life, but not a rich family, but money isn't everything when there is love. David & I would go everywhere together, like school, playground & just mucking around. David was doing well at school, but when he reached High school things changed, he would go to the shop & not come back, would steal things from stores (matchbox cars) & the last straw was when he stole a Policeman's son's pushbike & then he felt the full brunt of the law & was made a ward of the state, that absolutely broke our hearts, but David wasn't happy at the receiving home & he ran away & came back home, he was under the house for 4 days & when we discovered him, he was filthy & his mouth full of ulcers, an image that I won't forget, but we kept him with us for another 2 days before telling the police, when my mum told the police that David was being mistreated their exact words were "We don't care" & took him back, then the welfare tells us David has been sent to Wybra Hall at Mangalore, Southern Tasmania, I think David was there from Jan/Feb 1976 until his death on the 26/7/77 when it was his birthday on the 17th April, we all went down to get David & we had an excellent day together, but David wasn't himself, he hardly spoke, but we tried to make the most of a bad situation, the most traumatic experience I remember is when David had to go back to Wybra Hall & he was crying like I have never him before, but we knew there was something

terribly wrong with him, so it was a miserable trip back home. He would write us letters, but never would say what was happening at Wybra Hall, I'm sure the Head People would probably made sure the Boys said Nothing Against them. The welfare told us they were probably going to let David come home in August '76 but this wasn't going to be true for on the 26/7/76, David & 2 Younger Boys escaped from Wybra Hall & they broke into the Mangalore Service Station & stole a car, the other boys were 11, the Driver was 13 & David was 14, they were heading North to Launceston, but the Driver lost control of the car & it crashed killing David instantly, he was in the backseat. my world fell apart, how could I remember <sup>David</sup> in a nice way, for the last time I saw him was on his Birthday & seeing him so terrorised & upset. I went to school & they had an assembly to tell the students what happened & I felt the whole school looking at me but the kids were helpful, my only regret <sup>was</sup> I wasn't allowed to go to the funeral service as ~~back~~ in the 70's, 13 was too young to go to funerals, it was so sad as when we were at David's wake, mum received a letter from David so it must have been written a day or two before his death, I was told the Boys from Wybra Hall went to David's funeral & formed a Guard of Honour for him. After David's <sup>death</sup> I swore I never would drive a car, then my school work slumped, I had lost interest in school as my brother wasn't with me, so when I reached grade 9, I left school as I just had given up & wouldn't go, much to my parents displeasure, as time went by I went a bit off the rails, etc, smoking hanging around. Rough kids, Not that I did

anything wrong, but I guess Now Looking back, that was my way of Dealing with David's Death, As I do drive Now, have 2 great kids & a Husband, when the Abuse in state care came to Light, I found myself asking questions & have been told that the Abuse was occurring when David was in Wybra Hall, my Question is why can't we make a Compensation Claim as other people are, as my Brother was a Victim of Child Abuse & was killed escaping from the Abuse. This situation has made me very Emotional at times as when I told one of David's school friends about the Abuse, I Just fell to pieces with Tears as when you Read all the things that those poor Children went through, it's enough to send anyone to tears. Please find ENCLOSED some Newspaper CLIPPINGS & an ~~extract~~<sup>extract</sup> that I found on a website from A Person who was in Wybra Hall with David, I do believe David would still be with us if all the Abuse wasn't happening & he & the other boys found themselves stealing & breaking in to get away from the Monsters in Charge of Wybra Hall,

Thanks for your time,

Yours sincerely,

Patricia BROWN