



To Whom It May Concern:

Further to my statement, which was typed out from a tape recording, made by myself Keith Kelly.

Some very important details were left out from the transcripts. I will only list what I think is the most important.

Whilst at Tamworth Boys Home which was a jail for boys 16-18. The punishment was so sever, and the rations of food were so small that I lost 3 stone in weight in 5 months.

Because of hunger I faked being paralysed hoping that I would be sent to hospital knowing that I would then eat well, and maybe escape. On another occasion I planned whilst at a meal table to grab the person next to me, and attack him with a knife or fork. I wanted to afflict as much damage as I could. Then in my mind I would be arrested and charged with attempted murder. I would then have been sent to Long Bay Jail or an institution for the mentally ill either way I would have then had a decent feed, and would have been allowed to talk to other inmates.

I had already been thrown into solitary confinement 6 times for talking or suspected talking and was only given bread and water, on these occasions.

Other information was left out on the transcripts. But I can be contacted on these and the above matters at the above contact numbers.

Thanking You

Yours truly,

Keith Kelly

# **Submission to the inquiry into education of children in out-of-home care (ECOC)**

TRANSCRIPT OF MR KEITH KELLY

Submission No: ECOC 019

My name is Keith Raymond (Higgins) Kelly, I was born on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the sixth in 1944 at approximately twenty to seven in the morning. My childhood I suppose like most was OK. I had my ups and downs but I did not ... in my mother. One day I've come home from school, I was told by my mum that me, my brothers ... Laurie and Daryl would be going to Kincumber for four months as mum was sick. That four months turned into four years. While I was up there my mother passed away, I took it very hard. My brothers Laurie and Daryl did not quite understand what was happening as they were still very young in age. While we were there we were fed very well to the best of the ability of the nuns.

At the age of 12 I left Kincumber to go home to live with my dad. Unknown to me my dad only had two or three years to live at the most. He kept to himself, he never told anyone. Being home by myself I got into trouble, well if I had been home by myself sometimes Dad use to go out, I would stay home. On those occasions, many a time I got into strife and ended up in another Boys Home called Mittagong. I must say at this point I have been through 24 different institutions, jails and boys homes and orphanages. Sometimes they have been good, most of them have been ratshit. When I went to court, I was sentenced to what they call a general period to

Mittagong Boys Home, I arrived at Mittagong Boys Home. I was just probably about 12 years of age, knew no one, found it hard to settle in, I got strapped, when I was strapped I was brought back and I got what they call six cuts of the cane which left very large blisters on my hands, I mean large ones, as thick as what the cane was and as wide as what the cane was. I didn't appreciate that, I thought someone should say "hey why are you running away for, let's work this out". Anyway, at one stage there I got sick, I was sent down to the boys shelter at the Gladesville Hospital, ... Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney, they put tubes down my throat, put this white stuff down, took photos, sent me back to the Boys Home. And from there I started to say, hey what is happening, I have to get out of here; so I behaved to the best of my ability and I was progressed up the ladder as they say, and I was discharged in about six and a half months.

I went home to my Dad, again I got into trouble, again I went back to Mittagong. This time I went to what they call Home Eleven. Home Eleven was run by a sarcastic bastard is what all I could say. He did not like me, I don't think he liked any one but he took a load out on me. At one stage, he said 'if you want to piss off, there's the gate, go'. I took him at his word and went. Knowing I would be caught, well I was caught, I was held down by about four or five different people, while another two people got stuck into me. I had black eyes, split lips, and bruises all over me and all he did was laugh.

So about three weeks later, I planned to escape again, I did not like his methods to try to rehabilitate people and while locked in the dormitory at night I worked out I could get through the window behind my bed. The person, one of the people who turned around and got stuck into me, knew his bed was near the door, so I moved his bed over and blocked the door so no one could come in; to get revenge I done ah what they call 'a henry', put it near his head and just climbed out the window after I did that. I believe he was well and truly in the shits the next morning. From there I went over to get another pair of shoes out of the shed, got the guys number one, so I took my shoes and number one shoes. I then went to Mittagong, I found a cab, the cab was open, I think he had thirty pound in there, it went straight into my pocket.

I then (went) to the highway and found a semi trailer parked on the highway, I got into the back of the semi trailer. The driver the next morning started to go down the highway, pulled over about a mile down, come round to the back of the truck and told me ' come on son let's get down, I know you are up to your old tricks .to get in last night'. I believe he knew I was an escapee from Mittagong Boys Home but he didn't let on. He said, where are you going? I said, Sydney. He took me into Sydney, and he dropped me off somewhere near Pymont. From there I got a cab home, come in through the back of my place, down the lane way. I then got my clothes, and I left home. Started to live in an old derelict home, in Little Alfred Street, North Sydney.

From there I committed twenty two break-and-enters, mainly to keep myself alive. A bit of money, food, all that type of thing. Anyway to cut a long story short, I was caught trying to cut open a safe at the age of 12, 13 I think it was. I was caught by a policeman and I was taken to Yasma Shelter and charged with twenty two counts of break-and -enter and steal, and charged with escaping from lawful custody and a lot of other charges was thrown in between. My dad, at the moment I got into trouble, I would say he was there, he was sick, he would get out of bed and come help me, to the best of his ability in court, he was working, he arranged to have time off work. Anyway, I fronted the magistrate, remanded to front him again a couple of weeks later and was sentenced to two years on each charge. Well I started to cry, because I added it up, I thought I was doing 45 years or something of that nature and or 46 years whatever it may be. No one told me there it was concurrent, all I knew it was two years for each charge, and to me that was a hell of a long time. I burst out in tears, my dad comforted me, and I know it was for me that was the last time I ever seen my dad, because dad was dying, dad was a very, very sick man; and he was crying also.

I was sent to Gosford Boys Home, I was the youngest, sorry the second youngest boy in the institution. I was serving the second longest sentence. With one person was serving three years, the rest were serving what I call general periods, some were serving six months, some were serving twelve months, some eighteen; and here I am, some little boy serving two years. I had to learn very quickly, that I had to stand up on my own two feet, to fight my way through the institution to survive. This I did. My dad died while I was up there. I didn't know at that time, but they sent me

and my brother, who was there with me at this stage, down to the Boys Shelter at Albion Street and while there I was informed that my dad had passed away. I took it hard, very hard. All I could think of, here I am serving two years, having to do the whole lot, what is going to happen to me, I got no mum and no dad. My relations didn't seem to want to having anything to do with me, it was either not older enough to work and to young for other people to have to look after me because they would have to send me to school and have to pay for my education and stuff like that. And so I was on the outer.

It was down the Shelter, we went to my dad's funeral, and on the way back I escaped. I got caught the same day but at least I escaped, and only through my own stupidity I must believe, I got caught. This was probably another time, if someone would have spoken to me, taken me aside and said 'hey what is happening, let's work this out' I think there would have been one of the very few or probably one of a lot of people who would not repeat their crime or the life they were living or what they were doing. I was sent back to the Shelter, I stayed there for about two weeks, and they were deciding worth it to send me to Tamworth Boys Home or not; and Tamworth wasn't a boys home, it was a fucking jail. I expressed that very badly, because I ended up being there later on. Any way to cut a long story short, from that I finished my two years and I went back to Gosford, three times after that. Again no one to guide me, no one to speak to me, no one to take me aside and help me out. On one occasion while I was at Gosford, I escaped again, I was caught about four months later, ..... of the nic, whilst I was on the run at that time, and I tried my best to work but somewhere along the line I have a very bad back injury, I could not work or do anything. I wanted to work. I was offered work later, went around there the first day, even the second day to work but I could not stand the pain in my back. Anyway to cut a long story short, again I had to thieve to survive, couldn't do anything about that but a man has got to live, a man has got to feed himself. I was caught, and sentenced. Actually when I was caught I put my age up, I was only sixteen, I told them I was eighteen, they sent me out to Parramatta Jail. I must admit I was a little bit scared there, a little blonde headed boy, 18 years old sorry 16 years of age, with all these hardened criminals. But I survived. When I went back to court, I said I must do something now. I don't want to end up in jail. So I told them I was an escapee from Mount Penang and then he charged me, I think they still charged

me with the car theft, they charged me with escape and sent me down to Albion Street, the Boys Shelter. From there I was sent to Tamworth Boys Home, and I must admit I have never been to a place which made me so bitter and turn out so many criminals, murderers, rapists, car mob of people because that place just drank crime. On entering this Tamworth Boys Home, which they now I believe or they do still call it, Endeavour House, I think the only reason they changed the name to Endeavour House, to make it sound a little bit better than it was, because it was a fucking hell hole. I went in there, I have to mention some of these officers name, I can remember, but if you wish to delete the names you may do so. There is a guy there called Guildford, he was the Superintendent, they use to call him Tweenie Guildford because he acted like one, ... I now got a smack in the mouth and a kick in the nuts, went down to the floor, I said 'you are a big boy now, you want to fight, fight me'. He smacked me around a few more times, naturally I was going to fight back ... jail; I can't going anywhere. From there I proceed to the mess room, I was given my breakfast and more or less run down by the officers, you will regret this. Look at the other people, this is what is going to happen to you. You have a good look now, because this is the last time you are going to look. I looked around, and every one was so bloody skinny, I could not believe it, if I had have put BiAfrican children in there who had been starving for most of their lives, I would not be able to tell the difference. All clothes had patches on them all over the place, if we had a little rip you had to patch them up and so forth. All their heads were shaved, and their eyes were sunk into the back of their head. Anyway, while in this institution, it was the most fearful, and most frustrating, and most what ever you like to call it in my life. I could not stand it , I could not believe what was happening. I seen kids, sixteen years of age starved. Bobby Taylor, at one stage, was so hungry, he said sir, 'I am begging, can I have three decent meals'. He said 'get down on your hands and beg for those three decent meals'. Bobby did. Bobby got down on his hands and knees and begged in front of the other inmates and said ' sir I want three decent meals please. Three in a row.' So they gave him the three decent meals. They said you are going to pay for this. I believe Bobby went from sixteen stone down to seven and a half stone, that is a lot of weight. Bobby was a very ...staunch boy when he went in there.

You had Robby Williams, who was sick one day. ... he moved from side to side because he couldn't focus properly. He said if you want to look around, get up on the table. 'Look from left to right. Keep going. Fast as you can.' He said ' Sir I am going to be sick.' He said I don't give a stuff, keep going'. This boy was sick over the other inmates meals, we were forced to eat those meals and not clean up the stuff in front of us while we were eating.

This is just one or two little things. Now I tell you what I wanted to do. I wanted to get someone in the mess hall. I wanted to put a knife in his throat, or try and rip their throat open or rip their eyes out. This is what I wanted to do, but no I tried everything possible not to do it. I ended up in, what they call solitary confinement eight times. Six of those times, they were, I ended up, sorry it gets to me sometimes, I'd deliberately done what I had to do to get into solitary confinement, swore at the officers, threw tennis balls at them, whatever. So I would not harm another person or harm myself. At one stage, I couldn't take any more, I was sitting down at the meal time ... Stopped at 148 .....

Started at 202.

This is the type of place it was, it bred crime. It bred hate. It bred a lot of things. People use to say is that the best they can throw at me it is the worst. I can do it now. And when they got out, people are doing armed robbery, people who are doing murders, people who are raping people, and they just didn't care. They had nothing. They had all this hate in them. I still had to hate, some times I still got it. I still have nightmares at night. If anyone wants to doubt what I am saying about Tamworth Boys Home, I am willing to go under hypnosis and tell you. I would like to sit down with some one, I would like to say OK this is my life story. You had Chopper Reeves put his up, to make money out of it for kids. Let me do the same. Get some one to get me to give my story what happened to me and other kids around me. And I tell you what, it would stand up, and make Chopper Reeves story look like a bloody Sunday picnic.

I have seen so much hate, I have seen so much suffering. You keep going to different institutions and you see people saying 'how you going Keith, what are you

doing here'. 'I'm doing two years'. 'What for?' 'Attempted break and enter'. These days twenty five charges one guy got, he got six months. And a bloody twelve year old like I got two years in an institution where they starve you. No way I'd like to see any child go through what I been through. Not one. I don't care what colour, what creed, what religion. If you can help them. Help them. But a lot of people in my day have waited thirty years to bring their stories out, I have done the same thing. What I am telling people now is, don't wait thirty years. Do it now.

On leaving Tamworth I went back to Gosford Boys Home. While I was at Gosford Boys Home I realised at that stage I had been in custody for approximately two years, no outside contact as a free person. Again I realised I had no one to go out to, no one to look after me properly, my brothers, I doubt they were going to let me go until I was eighteen. So again, I escaped my and a friend of mine called Harry Swanson. I got out, went down Narraway, got caught about three months later. Got sent to what they call the Holding Shelter, at Albion Street, New South Wales. From there, the Whisky and GoGo brother, I can't think of his name at the moment, me and him and Harry Swanson planned to escape. The Whisky and GoGo ... was involved with Johnny Stewart up there in Queensland, nightclub ... too. This guy ... over so many years, just flipped his lid, because his mate did the same type of thing. Any way, we planned to escape. Bobby Vince got out, that is his name Bobby Vince got out, me and Swanny, Harry Swanson we were caught in the process. Just under the age of eighteen, we were sent to Long Bay Jail. From there we were sentenced to eighteen months, which I believe was a fair thing from the judge, judge ... considering.

To cut a long story short, I was in and out of institutions, never had a chance to have to have a say to someone, or some one to talk to me, sorry someone did talk to me one day, some psychologist, or psycho what ever you like to call him at Long Bay. I went in, he said sit down. He was writing there for about ten minutes or so and he said to me 'what would you do if you seen a battle ship come down the middle of George Street'. I said what's the bloody guy up to. So I said 'I would get a submarine and sink it'. He said 'where would you get the submarine from'. I said 'the same way got the battle ship'. That was for me, was all I could think of. And from that remark got me very adversely report as far as I know. Hence again, I was

sentenced to jail. Through my jail experiences, I have been to a lot of them, Long Bay, Bathurst, Goulburn, Cooma – a special work party down there, .....

(Stopped at 252)

(Recommended at 300)

As I said I have been at twenty four difference institutions, a period of nineteen years, five months and six days, I think I added up to. So I have done a life sentence in installments. I would like to see this tape used to the best of its ability. I would like to see CLAN make some type of recognition out of this tape. I would like someone to take me aside and say 'hey Keith we will do your story, we will do a movie like Chopper Reeves. I want, if that would happen, I would like the proceeds to go to help younger kids. I will put a plan together one day, to take young kids, I have still got the plan here, to the Boggo Road Jail for one day. The old Boggo Road Jail, put them through the system, show them what is like. The whole thing is here on paper. I would even send a copy of that with this letter. I would like to see young kids rehabilitated. Not thrown into jail or incarcerated. If you got a person like me, probably three or four other people in the same situation as me, through what I have been through, I believe that we can turn around and make sure, we got twelve kids, out of twelve probably one will end up in trouble. I know that, I have seen it happen. There is a friend of mine, actually he is in jail again unfortunately. He run a half way house in Sydney ... inmates. ...Half way house return rate to prison was I believe 10%. I could find out again the percentage is right. But it is something like 10%. The Government run ones were 80%. Hey who is making the improvements. Not the Government. It is the individual who has been there. The person who seen what happen. The person who seen the hate, the bashings. People getting raped, the whole lot you know. OK I have seen that in jail too, I have seen it in boys homes but not so much in the orphanages. Anyway, my name is Keith Kelly. I'll get back to you later. Thank you. Bye.

Back again. I thought I would just add a bit more to my story. While I was at Canberra, one of the officers got there smashed the living day lights out of me and called me a brothel ... bastard. Beg for your money you bastard. beg for your

mother. The more he hit me, the more I refused to utter a sound. I seen this happen to other people as well. Tamworth was a place that should not have been. I believe, I am not quite sure what minister, but some minister, in one of the governments, whether it be Labor or Liberal, I can't remember, actually closed it down after she seen the brutality. This is what I have been told, this is what has been written, this is the story I put in the paper up here. The actual bulletin. The bulletin done an inquiry into it, through one of them reporters. The reporter said that this woman, when she went to Parliament, was so upset on what she seen and so disgusted, she picked up the keys and threw it to the opposite member of or the opposition and said 'how can you do something like this, I just closed the fucking place'.

I would dearly love, to turn around as I said put my story on paper. But I need someone to help me. If CLAN can benefit from this I will be glad. I will push as much as I can but I am only a mere person. But I have found that through my life, I've got a brain on my head, I am not afraid of trying ideas. I am not afraid of going out an earning a quid but sometimes my lungs are not a hundred per cent so I am limited in what I can do. I am afraid to do different things that I know I can handle because I am afraid I might fail and go to jail. And this has been bred into me from the institutions 'you can't do this because you haven't got the brains', 'you can't do that because you haven't got the brains', I have got the brains, I have got the know how, still I have nightmares. I have nightmares, one or two a week. I am trapped in a place like a jail, trying to escape. It hurts me to have these nightmares, they give me the shits. I can't get rid of them. Maybe if I put my story on paper and it helps other people, make me feel better, and it is going to make a lot of other people happier because someone is doing something for them, to keep them out of boys homes or jail. If this is broadcast or anything to that nature or part of this I would like everyone who has been to Tamworth Boys Home or Endeavour House whatever you like to call it, it is the same place, the only difference is the name, they still starved you, they still belt you, I would like these people to get together with CLAN, get together and protest what happened to us. I don't want class action, I just want people to understand what we went through. What the Government put us through. What the Child Welfare put us through. If this can happen I will be happy. Because

if I can stop other people from going to jail or any other institution hey I am going to die happy man. OK this is all over. Thank you. Bye.