

S Pendergast

THIS IS A SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE INQUIRY "SENATE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS REFERENCE COMMITTEE"
IT IS ABOUT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY, CHILD WELFARE AND THE YOUTH WELFARE
ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA. I DO NOT KNOW IF IT IS WRITTEN AS A SUBMISSION SHOULD BE, BUT
IT IS MY STORY. I HAVE ALSO ASKED THE SENATE AS PART OF ITS INQUIRY TO LOOK AT THE CATHOLIC
CHURCHS "TOWARDS HEALING PROGRAM" AS I THINK IT IS RIGGED SO THE CHURCH ALWAYS COMES OUT
LOOKING INNOCENT.

SP



S Pendergast. (Nes TUCKER)

My name is Sandra Pendergast, I was raised in a private orphanage, I was placed in the orphanage's care in December 1943.

The orphanage was controlled by Youth Welfare Association of Australia (YWAA) and the main home was in Bowral and was known as Hopewood. YWAA is now known as The Australian Youth and Health Foundation.

YWAA was started in July 1942 by a Sydney Businessman Leslie Owen Bailey, L O Bailey owned a lingerie manufacturing business, he sold much of what he produced in his own chain of lingerie shops. L O Bailey did not believe in modern medicine and he decided to raise the 86 (43 boys & 43 girls) children on a meat free, sugar free and medicine "NATURAL DIET".

It was in October 1942 that L O Bailey via YWAA decided to start a home for "MOTHERS" who were either unmarried or unable to support themselves, he placed "ADS" in hospitals and doctors offices, he also informed the military (my own mother was in the Army) that his organization would take care of these pregnant women, between 1942 and 1949 he took in over 220 women, the home was known as Bellhaven and was situated at Bellevue Hill. During these formative years he was assisted by Florence Madge Cockburn, F M Cockburn was the chief executive in L O Bailey's business empire. So when YWAA was formed L O Bailey was the founder and president and F M Cockburn was vice-president, after L O Bailey died in 1964 F M Cockburn took over as president.

In 1943 YWAA purchased Hopewood House at Bowral along with 700 acres of land, a few months later the first of the 86 children were moved from Sydney. The Bowral site consisted of two large buildings (Hopewood House and The Pavilion) and many small cottages and farm buildings, it was large enough for all 86 children to live there together. In the early 1950's

L O Bailey arranged for YWAA to buy several properties and farms (a house in Moree, the vacant land next door - farms at Moree, Forbes, Bega - also a large house in Cook Rd, Centennial Park - a house and five blocks of land on Narrabeen lake). In the late 50's early 60's YWAA started buying land all over N.S.W. - Coogee, Loftus, Coffs Harbour, Darling Point, North Sydney and a large holiday resort at Wallacia plus other land in the area.

YWAA changed from being a charity whose function was to support an orphanage into a major property developer, much of its property development was through companies such as Hopewood Gardens, L O Bailey Investments, Progress & Properties No 2, Progress & Properties No 9, Progress & Properties (Bridgewater) P/L, Progress & Properties (Thorton Place) P/L, Roseview Const-ructions P/L. However many of the property deals were joint ventures with the HERSHON FAMILY and DAINFORD P/L. Despite now being a property developer YWAA still maintained its TAX EXEMPT STATUS.

MY STORY.

I am 59, until I was 49 I believed I was a war orphan. I was born in December 1943, my mother Beryl Mavis Tucker joined the Army in Tasmania in March 1943 and was sent to Sydney. In October 1943 the Army discovered my mother was pregnant. Instead of discharging my mother (I am certain that her service was not vital to Australia's war effort) she was

sent by the Army to a home run by a L O Bailey who at that time was in the process of collecting a number of infants both boys and girls to start what was to be a private experiment in what is generally known as "Natural Living". This natural living involved a life-style of no medical attention including basic immunisation, basic first aid for childhood accidents and a diet that left one so hungry that we would go thru the garbage bin outside the staff quarters seeking left-over scraps or begged school friends to give us some of their school lunch. This was the life the Australian Army sentenced me to by not allowing my mother a chance to hand her baby over to her family. Although my mother served no real vital military function she was required to report back on duty nine days after i was born, three months later she was discharged from the Army, so it is quite clear that her presence in the military was not vital. About 6 weeks after i was born my grandparents despite war time travel restrictions managed to travel from Tasmania to Sydney, they along with my mother went to see L O Bailey at the home where my mother had stayed before my birth and where i was supposedly being kept in his childrens home. My mother and my grandparents told L O Bailey that they were now in a position to take care of me themselves, Bailey told them that i had already been officially adopted out. I was robbed of a normal life, the thieves being the Australian Army The Australian Government and a madman known as Daddy Bailey. So it seems that it was far more important to the Army to be saved the inconvenience and embarrassment of discharging a pregnant soldier, than it was for the Army to ensure a baby grew up with its family, the Army washed its hands of the future welfare of baby. So thanks to the Australian Army and Australian Government i finished up being raised in the Hopewood Home.

LIFE IN THE HOPEWOOD HOME

In the early 1940's Leslie Owen Bailey (L.O B) decided he would try an experiment of bringing up children on a strict vegeaterian diet. He then set about getting the babies he needed. He advertized in womans magazines and informed the military i.e Army, Navy and Air Force, to send pregnant womem to him My mother was in the Army, when the Army finally realised my mother was expecting she was "Marched into Bellhaven" a babies home L O B had aquired in Sydneys Eastern suburbs. From October 1943 til December 1943 my mother lived at Bellhave She earned her keep working in the home laundry, she worked up until the 24th December 1943. I remained in my mothers care for a grand total of 9 days. My mother was recalled to active service but only for three months, then the Army discovered they no longer needed her, but 3 months too late for me.

So started my life in L O B private orphanage. L O B eventually aquired 86 babies 43 girls and 43 boys from about 1942 to 1949. We were told from an early age that we were war orphans and that we should be glad and grateful for what L O B did for us. We heard that story all our lives. We were lied to all our lives.

Education Hopewood Style.

Education started at the age of 5, i attended 3 different schools each year, for example first term would be at Bowral infants then we would spend the holidays at Hopewood, second term at Moree, holidays at Hopewood, third term at Narrabeen then holidays at HOpewood. Next year 1st term Moree, 2nd Narrabeen 3rd Paddington, holidays in between at Hopewood. It was very hard to get settled into a rhythm of schooling and making school friends and also learning with so many moves. If we made friends at school we were not allowed to go to their house and they were not allowed to come to our house. At the end of formal schooling many of the Hopewoods (the 86 children were known as The Hopewoods) left school unable to read write or do basic maths or spelling. i was lucky i could read and write. We were not taught any life or social skills, such as how to socialize with other people, how to go shopping, how to handle money or how to buy clothes, feed or obtain housing. We were not taught the need to spend

carefully or to save money. Most of our food was raw, so we were not taught even basic cooking, we were not taught even simple skills like knitting or sewing. We did not have any role models, there was no one who could teach us how to behave properly with people (we were unaware of life's dangers) in any situation or company. Our carers changed constantly. We had a lot of carers, quite a few were nice people, but many that stayed, stayed because they liked being cruel and abusive. I believe some carers reported what was happening to us to the child welfare but it seems L O B always had answers or friends in high places.

DIET.

As children we were on a strict vegetarian diet, most of the food was uncooked vegetables (ie beetroot, sweeds, turnip, parsnips, pumpkins) which were fed to us RAW. These vegetables in their raw state were horrible, we also had salads (tomatoes, lettuce) with chick peas, soya beans and a small amount of cheese and eggs. The only cooked vegetable we had was potatoes, others ie carrots, cauliflower, cabbage, peas and beans were either cooked or raw. We had no meat or fish. We were always hungry, so stealing from the staff kitchen or garbage was rife. We were never allowed into the kitchen to learn cooking.

MEDICAL CARE

L O B was a believer that conventional medicine didn't work. We were not allowed to have any vaccinations for childhood diseases (ie polio and other disease vaccines were available after WW2) When I was 12 I injured my leg at school (a large cut from a drainage pipe), I was taken to hospital by ambulance, just as I was about to have the injury stitched and a tetanus injection, L O B was informed by the hospital of my condition. L O B forbade the doctors to give me any medical treatment. L O B told the doctors that he did not believe in formal medicine but only in natural healing (I could hear their phone conversation). There was a heated argument and the doctor informed L O B they would have to get a court order as my leg could get infected. I ended up getting the tetanus injection and had 12 stitches in the wound. I still have the horse-shoe scar (L O B was very angry with me afterwards). Other times when we got sick, no matter how bad, we were put on a water diet (no food for 6 or 7 days then fruit juice for three days) and were told the BADNESS (whatever that meant?) in us was what made us sick. During our childhood we were given a kelp supplement, it mustn't have been good for us, me and a few others finished up in the R P A H, we were never given the kelp supplement again.

SEXUAL, PHYSICAL, VERBAL and PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSES

PHYSICAL and SEXUAL ABUSE.

Being given bowel washes by L O B, pushing a tube up one's rear end was very uncomfortable, it also verged on sexual abuse. While he was giving the bowel wash he would be fondling one's vagina and playing with himself. L O B also enjoyed the result. Many carers spent a great deal of time washing our private parts, much longer than necessary with fingers touching and tickling. There were quite a few sexual abuses brought to L O B's notice only once were the police called. Other times the perpetrators were allowed to continue working in the different homes.

VERBAL ABUSES.

It was very demoralising to be told over and over again that we were not wanted, told to think how lucky we were that L O B took us in, or how we would have died, how we were bastards but at the same time told we were war orphans with no parents. If we confided in our carers about personal problems some

carers would then broadcast the problem to everyone in the house and they would all have a good laugh and make fun of you. We had no one to talk about our problems. We were forced to eat the raw vegetables by having it forced into our mouths (raw beetroot, raw pumpkin) and being told it was good for us. We were hit and belted with a cane by L O B, he made both boys and girls remove their underpants before belting us (even when we were 12 or 13).

PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE.

We seemed to have a lot of different carers, it was in the back of ones mind will the next carer be nice or nasty, friendly or vicious, kind or cruel. We Hopewoods did not know what a normal family life was, we thought everyone behaved like L O Bailey.

We had no nurturing, no love, no hugs, no kisses all necessary in ones up bringing, it was nearly 45 years before we could hug each when we met and talk openly about what we had been through. A lot of Hopewoods are still mixed up and still having problems and no one to turn to. For a lot there are still no answers.

LEGAL STATUS.

I have attempted to find out what my legal status was or is -- I have discovered that the 86 Hopewood children had no, legal standing, we were not adopted, we were not wards of the State, we were not fostered - The STATE has no record of us except for our birth certificates. ASTOUNDING.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD CONVENT.

When i was 14, L O Bailey put me and 12 other Hopewood girls into the Good Shepherd Convent at Ashfield, Sydney, he paid the nuns to take us off his hands.

The Good Shepherd Convent was in fact a COMMERCIAL LAUNDRY housed in a CLOSED INSTITUTION (a description given to my husband by Cardinal Clancys aid Father Brian Lucas) where girls convicted in court could go (instead of Parramatta Girls Home or similar goals) to serve their sentence.

HOPEWOOD and THE GOOD SHEPHERD CONVENT

In 1958 L O Bailey decided to dispose of many of the girls under YWAA's care (in spite of the undertaking he had given their mothers) 5 girls (aged 14/15) were sent to be domestic servants (some unpaid) in houses in Sydney and isolated properties in the country, these were the lucky ones. Thirteen of the girls (aged 13/14) were placed in the Good Shepherd Convent, at Ashfield Sydney, the selection of this institution was very strange, because this Convent was a closed institution, a de-facto prison where girls who had been convicted by the courts were sent to serve their sentences, girls were locked-up 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week, the Convent was totally enclosed by high stone walls (in some places topped by barb wire) and all the doors locked.

L O Bailey had put 13 young girls in goal. None of the 13 girls had been in trouble with the Courts. The nuns and L O Bailey reached an agreement where according to F M Cockburn YWAA paid the Convent "A MORE THAN GENEROUS AMOUNT PER GIRL PER WEEK". We now had the situation where 13 rather naive girls found themselves in prison, 3 girls continued to receive an education but the other 10 were put to work in the Convents "COMMERCIAL LAUNDRY", 6 of these girls were confined in this de-facto prison until they were 18, these 6 girls spent 4 years or more working as UNPAID LABOURERS in the NUNS COMMERCIAL LAUNDRY. When they neared their 18th birthday, they were called out of the workrooms, told to change their clothes, they were given a small suitcase

which contained all their possessions, they were given \$1-00 and shown the door. These girls were just dumped on the street just a few days before their 18th birthday, they were not given a chance to tell the other girls that they were leaving.

Last year (under Towards Healing) i asked the nuns to explain their treatment of me, (ie i was Church of England but was not allowed to go to Sunday service, but was forced to attend Mass), they ignored this question and every other question i asked..

I have asked if the nuns really believed that all of a sudden so many Hopewood girls became so BAD that they needed incarceration in a "CLOSED INSTITUTION" they ignore this question.

I have asked why we were NOT PAID, they claim THE ARBITRATION COMMISSION gave them permission not to pay us. BUT THEY WONT TELL WHEN AND WHERE THIS DECISION WAS HANDED DOWN SO I CAN CHECK IT MYSELF.

"THE TOWARDS HEALING PROGRAM" and THE GOOD SHEPHERD SISTERS.

Please look into this so called program, i have tried to get some help from the church but they hide behind this "Program" I have no real education (few people who were raised in institutions are educated) yet this "Program" seems to quote all sorts of laws, even Canon Law - it is rigged to give the outcome the church wants. Could please get some (non catholic) lawyers or whatever to review this "Program" and report on its FAIRNESS TO BOTH SIDES, IN PARTICULAR WHO ACTS AS JUDGE (it seems the Order of the Good Shepherd will judge itself and only it hears the other sides evidence).

Yours faithfully,

S. Pendergast

EXTRA TO SUBMISSION.

Could this Committee request the State and/or Federal Governments to set up some sort of Review Tribunal. This Tribunal would operate in a way that victims of Orphanages/The Churchs/Institutions etc., could present their cases without needing to have or needing to fight against, highly paid lawyers or barristers. (The head of the Jesuits Father Raper said the Church uses every legal trick possible to stop hearings). Most of those raised or from institutions are poorly educated and therefore are generally among the poorest people in Australia. It seems crazy that a person wronged by an institution can't obtain justice because the other side has access to unlimited legal power.

S. Pendergast