

24 MAY.
DEAR SENATORS

SORRY FOR THE HAND WRITTEN LETTER -
I'm AWAY IN N.S.W ON HOLIDAYS AND DON'T
HAVE A PRINTER.

THERE ARE STILL A FEW OF THE 'OLD SCHOOL'
STILL ALIVE WHO WITNESSED THE ONSET & COMPLETION
OF THE DESTRUCTION OF A ONCE FUNCTIONAL
MENTAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.

THE OLD SCHOOL ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO
KNOW HOW TO FIX IT.

ENCLOSED IS A FLYER FOR MY LATEST
BOOK THAT SAYS IT ALL (WELL ALMOST)

SADLY TODAY THERE ARE NONE SO DEAF AS
THOSE WHO DO NOT WISH TO HEAR.

I PREDICT OUR MENTAL HEALTH CARE
SYSTEM WILL SELF DESTRUCT COSTING MUCH
MORE AND ACCOMPLISHING EVEN LESS.

KIND REGARDS

KEN RAYNE



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Mick Sandes left a lonely town on the central coast of New South Wales as a young lad in 1954 excited, though not a little apprehensive that he had been accepted into the Royal Australian Navy. As it turned out, by the time he had returned to the serenity of civilian life seven years later, his memories of the Senior service had destroyed any vestige of excitement. He began a career that was about to enter in the most dramatic changes in mental health care since the days of colonisation.

The author makes no attempt to conceal his own feelings towards those who, under the pretence and guise of economics and human rights, tossed thousands of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged of our citizens out of mental hospitals into the streets to be exploited, robbed, taken down, sexually violated and killed. What is even worse to be left to wander without hope.

In many ways, the tragic legacy of the disintegration of a once functional mental health system, was played out in a sequence of events that led to the legacy of a man after my own heart, a true mate: Michael John Sandes.

For the odd dysfunctional who may think that mental health care today is working efficiently, so be it, but in respect at least to the past, cast an eye below to what we did to the old system that at least did work.

FROM THIS



TO THIS



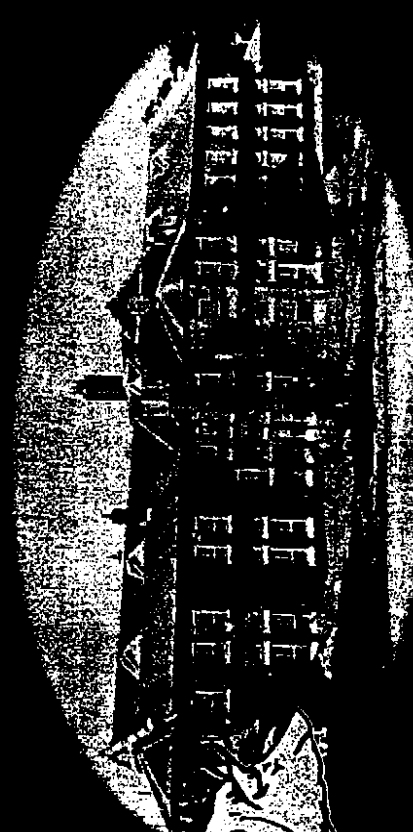
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KEN PAYNE

A TRILOGY OF MICHAEL J.

A TRILOGY OF MICHAEL J.

- Mutiny on D59 • Madhouse Memoirs
- Slaughter on Piggery Hill



Ken Payne

The Cornelia Rau case has provided much fodder for Sir Joh's chooks with the press driving most of us crazy in the process, with yet another drawn out enquiry in the pipeline still to come. Yet another tragic, boring, and endless saga of a mentally ill person who wanders in search of psychiatric help, but unable to find it, ends up in a refugee detention centre. I suppose that's a lot better than ending up under a train or at the end of a rope like many others have. Does this not cause us once again to confront the catastrophic mental health care blunders of our recent past?

A police officer was shot with his own gun last week by a deranged man who then shot himself. A man on Bondi beach with a knife in his hand and in need of psychiatric care, was killed with bullets by police officers not so long ago. This police homicide could have easily been avoided by a hand full of sand in the face and a tackle from behind. Thirty people in Victoria, mostly mentally ill, have been shot dead by police over recent years. Police face no more danger from lunatics than the unarmed staff did who risked their lives on a day to day basis in the Morisset maximum security section. A time long gone when proper facilities existed.

Dangerous, psychiatrically disturbed killers appear to be able to come and go as they please as was proven in the Claude Gabriel case. Such killers from the past have knocked on my own door during the night looking me up. Eight hundred million dollars has just been allotted by the Victorian government to prop up a dysfunctional mental health care system. This money is only chicken feed to what has already been wasted on a National level.

All this and volumes more are the result of 41 Government funded enquiries into the failed care of our mental health system over the years. The emptying of mental hospitals in the 70's and the wilful destruction of tax payer-funded functional and valuable buildings was a corporate crime committed by politicians. It was a mistake of monumental proportions that will never be admitted to. If the advice and counsel of the qualified staff of the day was ever sought, this state of affairs would never have happened. They were totally ignored and simply sat back to witness the inevitable that is now upon us.

There is barely a single member of society who is not painfully aware of the plight of our mentally ill. An exception could be made for the few dunderheads that caused it all in the first place. It will be interesting to see how far the wheel has to turn before enough political brains can be scraped up to rectify the situation and to terminate and revert what can only be called a national disaster.

Award winning author Peter Kocan saw the world from both sides of a mental hospital. In real terms, he had everything to gain from the closing down of institutions because he had spent ten years in one. Yet he intuitively penned these words to me in comments he made of a previous book I had written.

"My hospital life formed the back ground of my best selling novels. The emptying of mental institutions, what Ken calls the Turf em out, policy, took place right across the Western world and too often left the mentally ill adrift in the streets, more distressed, more hopeless, and more stigmatised than before. The mentally ill were just one group among the tens of millions of people who were being

crushed between two ideological juggernauts in recent decades."

On one hand was a rising "economic rationalist" brutality that was eager to cut public services in infrastructure on any pretext, and on the other, a raging "liberationist" ethic that proclaimed everyone's right to be free according to a definition of freedom that was tailored for hippies and yuppies, but hardly for any one else. It is ironic that the "Turf em out" policy came just a few years after the advent of new medications, that made asylums more settled places."

"Violent or crazy behaviours which had once raged unchecked, or been dealt with by crude physical force, could now be addressed with medication. This did not make institutions all sweetness and light, for medication could itself be a brutal imposition, but it did make for a greater overall degree of calmness in which daily life could go on. For a brief while, those institutions became more like real communities where inmates could live in a shared normality of their own, like the inhabitants of some eccentric village. [emphasis added] There were stable relationships, work routines, sports and social events. I myself saw the last of all that."

"Almost like the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII, a whole social system of support and sanctuary was swept away for cynical motives, and the poor and the mad, and the bereft, were the main losers."

May God truly bless and protect our politicians, they are under-paid and do not receive adequate remuneration for the tremendous responsibilities they bear on a daily basis. They continue to cop our abuse unabated. Have you ever spent a moment contemplating where our country would be headed without them? Stop bellyaching and enjoy the wonderful country that we share together whilst we still have it.

It is simply a matter of life, and a pity, that politicians are proof-coated by a sinister system that is doomed never to change because to change it, men with the courage of their convictions will be needed to stand up and to be counted, to denounce and defy the Party machine to which they belong and by which they are muzzled. The pendulum of political expedience swings endlessly to and fro between telling lies for the good of all, and refusing to admit and rectify mistakes, and to take responsibility for them. That is not a portent of hope for our mentally ill.

The full extent of human misery, loss of life, and exploitation caused directly by the emptying of mental hospitals is something we will dearly pay for. Such will only be fully realised the day we are no longer able to support a mental health care bill that will become unsustainable, or when we are finally overwhelmed and overtaken by our total inability to cope with the mental care crisis that lies just ahead. Believe me, it lies just ahead!

Here is "A Trilogy of Michael J.," a three-dimensional walk with a man who saw it all come and go.

The book is dedicated to the God of Israel who once impressed upon Abraham Lincoln that all men are born equal and should be treated so. Both God and Lincoln would be distressed I am sure the way things have turned out for many, in particular, our mentally ill.