

The Victorian Royal Commission  
into Family Violence.

Commissioner Marena Neave.

Patricia Faulkner  
Tony Nicolson.

My Name is Kathleen Cropley. and this is just a small account of the things my husband did to me and my children.

I was 18 years old, I had a job as a clothing machinist and money in the bank.

I met this person through my sister. We dated. 6 months and 1 day later we were married. I have been told that the minute he met me he knew he could control me. He abused me from the start and my family saw this and did nothing.

After we were married he separated me from every one who knew me.

I was his possession.

I was not allowed to talk to my family or friends. I would work from 8am to 5pm weekdays, and then have to go to work with him, get home at 3 or 4am and then up for my work at 7am. This went on for years until I became pregnant with my first child. I still had to go until baby was born.

When he was taken away from the family home and told not to return (by the police) my eldest daughter said that I should write a list of all the things he did to me.

She started the list off, and I added to it.

This list is not in order of the time these things happened.

- \* When pregnant - kicked in the stomach.
- \* Broken nose - numerous times
- \* When driving was hit and punched to the side of my head.
- \* Was kicked out of bed when sex was lifeless.
- \* Quite often would bash head into wall
- \* No contact with other people.
- \* Had to tell him everything I did, every where I went including going to the toilet, getting the mail.
- \* Not allowed to have contact with my 3 eldest children
- \* Was not allowed to rest when sick.
- \* I was made to look after him
- \* I had dinner and dinner plates smashed over my head if the meal was a little bit cold.

- \* My first asthma attack I was told to get out of bed and cook his meal and stop putting on a act.
- \* I did not know how to turn a computer off, so he nearly killed me. (police report)
- \* Hurt my neck so bad I was in pain for about 3 weeks.
- \* Had a plate of spaghetti poured over my head in front of the children
- \* Hit me with a piece of 4 x 2 wood.
- \* Bruises all over my body.
- \* Pulled my hair out.
- \* Kicked up the bottom, between my legs that my vaginal area was swollen and bruised.
- \* Kicked in the legs while he was wearing steel capped boots, still have pain from this
- \* Mother and Grandmother saw him punch me outside the family home before I was married and said nothing.
- \* Wacked over and punched to my ears so badly that they were huge. (swollen). I could hardly hear.
- \* Hit me while I was driving causing me to have a accident and then hit me some more because I had a accident
- \* Spot in my face.

- \* Was made to go out for a walk after just having an asthma attack.
  - \* After spending days in hospital after having DVT's and told to rest. I was made to make myself busy. I could not rest or sit down.
  - \* Went to bed before he got home from work and got punched in the nose. (Broken)
  - \* Shot at with a gun while holding my baby.
  - \* Had to go to work with black and swollen eyes.
  - \* Punched in the eye so hard that the eye (pupil) would not open and close. It was in the open position for weeks.
  - \* Huge lumps on face and head after being punched.
- Was told. -
- \* I was a dumb bitch
  - \* Old sow
  - \* Didn't deserve the ground that was coming to me.
  - \* Brainless
  - \* Ugly.
  - \* Why do I have to wake up to your ugly face
  - \* Fat slab.
- \* Pulled out handfuls of hair.
  - \* When I am around people I am to keep quiet as I might embarrass him.

- \* Kicked and punched out of bed while asleep.
- \* Do I have to look at your ugly face when I wake up.
- \* Told I deliberately had a hysterectomy just to spite him. (medical reports from 2 doctors).
- \* I had to sleep naked.
- \* Not allowed to wear a nightie to bed.
- \* Had one ripped off me
- \* Not allowed to wear a necklace or earrings
- \* Never had money.
- \* Had to account for every cent of grocery money I spent.
- \* Had to creep around the house when he was asleep.
- \* Keep children quiet.
- \* Told off if he didn't get breakfast on time
- \* Made to cut and file his toenails
- \* I should kiss him goodnight as a sign of respect.
- \* Not allowed to have pictures of my children
- \* Made to feel guilty if I sat down
- \* I am not allowed to collect mail
- \* I would have to ask if I could have a shower.
- \* I was not allowed to go to bed until he said so.
- \* I would have to ask for permission when I wanted to go to the toilet.

- \* He put his foot out and tripped me up in the kitchen
- \* I was 8½ months pregnant with DVTs in my legs. He put me out of the car and told me to walk home and think about what I had to do to appreciate him.
- \* I had to cook restaurant type meals for him.
- \* Never the same meal twice.
- \* I was overdue to give birth to my baby so he took me out in a boat ~~with~~ when there were choppy seas to hurry it along (very painful).
- \* I was raped all the time
- \* Take me for a walk at night in the bush just so he could beat me up and no one would hear me scream.
- \* When taking children to school or friends I was on a time clock.

This person did not drink,  
smoke or have any thing to do  
with drugs.

\* When I was in hospital having a baby my eldest daughter would have to fill my place and cook, clean and be a mother to the other children. This started when she was 7 years old. If the meals weren't right he would beat her.

I did try to leave him.  
He would find me, bring me home, and beat me up some more.

Over the years (30 years of marriage)  
The police were called.

The Department of Human Services were called

School teachers knew what was happening and no one helped me and my children.

Once I tried to leave and wanted to rent a house through an Estate Agent and they said that they wouldn't rent to me as I was a single mother with 7 children, (I hadn't left him, I was trying too.).

I had no money, no family and no where to go. So I had to stay.



This list is just a example of the things he would do. (A Small example)

- \* He abused all my children. I have 7 children
- \* He had my children so frightened they dare not do anything wrong
- \* He would beat them with a large stick.
- \* He called it the Wamp Stick.
- \* He beat all of them because \$2 had gone missing
  
- \* He abused the children so much that the court said that he was never to see or have anything to do with them again.
- \* I believe that all my children have problems with people, relationships and do not like any type of conflict, even if it is sticking up for themselves at work.
- \* Most of them don't talk to each other.
  
- \* I am still finding out today some of the thing he did to my children
  
- \* My eldest son has recently had surgery to fix problems with his nose that was caused all those years ago.

After he was removed from the family home. He would come back when the children were at school, let himself into the rented house and rape me repeatedly. I was made to tell him I loved him.

After a while I reported this to the Police and they said that they had taken out an intervention order out on my behalf and they charged him.

He lived down Melbourne and I was in Gippsland. with the children.

He attended Anger Management Classes. and all that managed to do was to give him more and better ideas of how to abuse me. (This was in a group class)

I am sorry this is not written in order of the events happening. I am writing as it comes to me.

Just a note to say I had one girl friend whom I met up with while I was working. We had gone to school together as children. She was not allowed to come to our house but we had secret phone calls. One day she rang and said she would come and pick me up and go out

shopping. It was all arranged a ~~week~~ week ahead of the day. She knew he was not going to be home. She rang. Said "are you ready" I said "I can't come". It was then that she found out after about 10 years that he had been beating me up. I had a black eye on that occasion. She was horrified that I hadn't told her.

Every part of our lives inside the house were secret.

I was married to this person for 30 years. Had 7 children.

We all have been scared.

Since being on my own. Raising the children and teaching them to be the people they are I am very Proud and sad at the same time. I have the most amazing children, they are all adults now.

I am Proud of how they have gone on to be beautiful, caring, loving adults

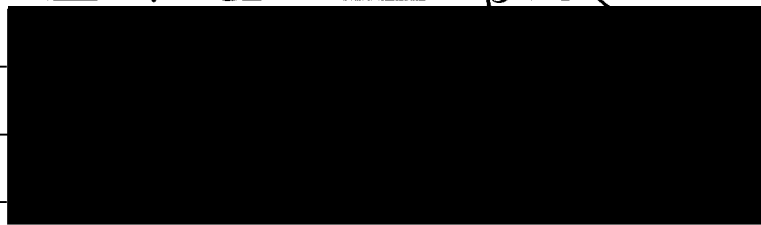
I have wanted to do this for some time now.

The person I was married to passed away some years ago.  
So he will never be able to hurt any one else, ever again.

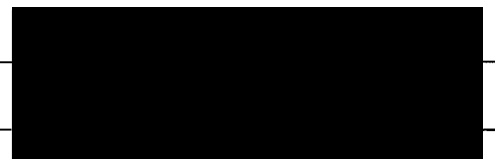
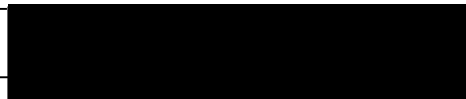
If at any time someone would like to talk to me about my life I am available to speak.

Contact Details.

Kathleen Cropley



Phone Mobile



25 - 4 - 2015

I believe that for things to change it should start from childhood.

Teach children that this is not acceptable and encourage them to speak about home life.

So called Anger Management should be a one on one sessions program. Not in a group session as they only hear and learn new ways to hurt their families.

Highly trained social workers (trained in Domestic Violence) to know and recognize the signs and see past the lies.

The Police need to have more insight into Domestic situations and don't dismiss families calls for help.

Set up and make counselling more available and easier to access. The counsellor needs to be highly skilled in Dealing with Domestic Violence.

Not your everyday counsellor

In the past I was let down by many people.

First of all my family. My Parents, my brothers and sisters. No one said anything.

In 1970 I had to get permission to marry from a Magistrate. He was not aware and my mother didn't tell him of the abuse.

(1972) The police were called and he was told to behave himself. even though I had been beaten with a piece of wood.

The Department of Social Security was contacted by one of my daughters. She was telling the truth and I lied and said that nothing happened because they interviewed me in front of my husband. I lied to protect my self and my children from harm. (1990's)

My daughter went to the local Police station and reported the abuse that happened in 1999. She got off the school bus four days in a row. No one listened to her

She was 15 years old. If it hadn't been for a young constable who heard what my daughter had to say each day and contacted the policing squad in Sole. Nothing would have happened. This is because the more senior officer did not want to deal with it.

This senior officer told me later on that it would have taken a murder to get him to come to my house and then he said maybe not.

I wish to say that to date and even writing this letter the thing that has been the hardest to deal with is the fact that I can't remember most of what he did (the children's father) to my children.

I feel so much guilt about this I don't believe that guilt will ever go away.