



May 18, 2015

## Royal Commission into Domestic Violence

Thank you for this only opportunity I have had for over 20 years to share my horrific experience at the hands of a perennial perpetrator of violence against women.

In the early [REDACTED]'s, I was a single, professional Mother of two children when I met a detective with the [REDACTED] CIB. Unbeknown to me, he was also a raging alcoholic with a history of domestic violence.

We bought a business together and the violence became life threatening and life changing. At first it was bending of my fingers so that they swelled – to the point I could often not use fingers for weeks on end because of the damage. It then escalated to dreadful physical attacks, usually whilst on a drinking binge, often in the early hours of the morning when there were no witnesses.

After several years, trips to doctors and casualty, I left the relationship broke. And broken. My life was in tatters as my children had become estranged during this time and my family, frustrated at my absence from their lives (often due to injuries) or inventing stories to try and disguise the abuse, disowned me.

As a police officer, at the station I called many times for help, his actions were not only ignored, but also protected and covered up. Many times I was told either to not take it any further for the sake of my family, or, especially female officers suggested I had brought the attacks on myself. As I had invested every cent I had in the business we were trying to run together, I had to ensure the violence as I would have left the home (and business) penniless. Which is what happened, eventually.

The person who inflicted such physical and psychological abuse on me for years also abused his former wife (one of the reasons, including adultery, that ended his first marriage). I only found this out after I contacted her for help.

I have been told that he had a history of violence towards women, and subsequently abused other partners after me. His family not only hid his actions but, in many respects, gave him the opportunity to inflict such suffering as they always welcomed him back, seeing the abused partner as the 'bitch'.

This generational attitude towards the victimised female, this ignorance of his alcoholism and criminal behaviour, always a home to retreat to in crisis, gave him the ability to never be accountable – never told to get help. Be a man.

I feel that, at the time I was being abused, if the police force (even though he was a serving and then former member), had taken my claims seriously, encouraged me to make charges against him, and, quite simply believed me, he would not have been able to get a job in a government agency in [REDACTED] with no criminal record.

A criminal record would have not enabled him to continue, in many respects, on his path of abuse as he would not have been able to obtain a government position with a criminal history. He is still working in an agency where, for the past 20 years, he has not only had access to vulnerable women (unemployed and disadvantaged women), but also their teenage daughters.

The reason I left after years of abuse was that he starting making sexual references to my [REDACTED] year old daughter.

After leaving I returned to the workforce and completed a Bachelor undergraduate degree, then a post graduate with a Dip Ed. I am currently completing a [REDACTED] degree. I have clawed my way back, but the pain and suffering he inflicted on me for years will never leave.

I would like to be part of any program that forces repeat offenders of domestic violence against women to pay for their crimes. And for the 'father to son hierarchy' of abuse be investigated as part of a campaign to see offenders (and their families who harbour the abuse). Ethical fathers raise ethical sons.

Thank you for this opportunity.

I hope I can be part of any ongoing report and will aid the Commission in any way I can to better equip young men for relationships. And prepare young women to seek help early on when the signs are obvious – often just a look in the mirror.

[REDACTED]