



## Linda's Story

Linda arrived early for her afternoon interview, and jumped straight into her story. She told us that she would start by talking about the violence she experienced as a child, and then talk about violence she experienced as an adult.

Linda talked about severe physical and psychological violence from her father that started at a young age. She remembers a lot from her childhood, and spoke about all the violence her father used against her when she was a toddler, young child and adolescent.

Linda told us about subsequent experiences of violence, largely sexual assault, perpetrated by male relatives (at least two male cousins when she was between the ages of 4 and 9, and one of her uncles when she was a young teen), a male partner (which resulted in a forced pregnancy), a boarding house proprietor and various other men.

While at the boarding house, Linda witnessed numerous crimes. She told us that many of these crimes – domestic violence, robbery, assault, sexual assault – went without any police response. Linda left the boarding house. She told us that finally, the boarding house was closed down and stripped of its license for mismanagement.

### **What Linda said:**

*So it's been a long history of what's been going on in my life. Like I said, I don't know why I can't find the will to defend myself, like hey back off from the sexual assault, even though afterwards I feel angry and I go why didn't I deck that guy, but you can't do that.*

### **About the violence she experienced as a child Linda said:**

*I do remember that my father - I was a breastfed baby and I remember my father flicking me in the head and trying to remove my head from my mother's breast when I was feeding, as though he was really jealous. My mother said he was jealous of me.*

*I copped all the abuse; the physical abuse, the psychological abuse, but he never sexually abused me. Not my father. But I had various other parties that were involved.*

*He used to pick me up by the ears or he'd get the scruff of my hair and pull my hair and drag my hair to the bathroom or wherever he was going. It was really bad.*

*I was only five years old. That was one incident that happened and I was all black and blue. All my legs were covered in black and blue bruises.*

*[About sexual abuse perpetrated by her cousins] he did those things to me until I was nine years old. From four to nine... When I was nine, I told my mother what happened. I told her everything. She was angry and frustrated and she wanted to talk to [my aunt] about - do you know she talked to [my aunt] about all this disturbing information about [my cousin] and [my aunt] protected him and said that she doesn't want him to go to prison, because he'll go to prison, you know, like that, and she protected him, so my mother agreed not to say no word about it.*

*And, when I used to get hit from my mother, I one time dug my fingernails into my cheeks because I was so angry because she hurt me and there was that and there were times that I'd try and put a plastic bag over my head and strangle myself. I'd try to strangle myself, but it was very painful to suffocate myself. It was painful. It's painful. When it starts to get too much you can't breathe. It starts to hurt.*

*[My mum] wanted all my money, my pension money, and it was hard to stick up for myself. It's like I was in a relationship with my mother that it wasn't - I couldn't be honest with her, I couldn't stick up for myself...*

**About the impact of the violence Linda said:**

*I always had gastric - because I was always anxious and shaking and I had pains in the gut all the time and I used to wet myself because of all the stress and all that and I'd cop hidings all the time for wetting myself.*

*I had problems with my schooling because of the - probably from the abuse.*

*I went to a boarding school because I stopped talking when I was eight. The stuttering got really bad to the point - because my father was hitting me too much. My father was really belting into me too much and I stopped talking because I couldn't say anything properly and they put me into boarding school called [school name], and that's for mentally disturbed as well as unwanted children and children with disabilities.*

*Child abuse has left my life so lonely. That's what I've come to realise. And now I'm more vulnerable because I don't have my parents or anything.*

### **About the violence she experienced as an adult Linda said:**

*When I was 23 years old, I went into a boarding house and I was first in hospital for about six months because I was homeless as well as I had psychiatric problems, and I ended up in this boarding house.*

*[the boarding house proprietor's] father tried to get me drunk and was ejaculating on my back, like that, and he was trying to strip me like that, because he gave me ouzo and I told Brian about it... No-one called the police.*

*[the boarding house proprietor] he wanted to do a topless - he wanted to do me a tattoo picture on my front and he wanted me to take off my bra and I was really scared. ... He did the tattoo and all that and I was really scared and then he started to hurt my nipples and all of that, and I was really, really scared, and then he got me on the bed and was trying to rough me up a bit on the bed and do certain things, thrusting on the bed with clothes on, and I was really scared.*

*Yeah, I fell pregnant. I was in a de facto relationship but I never wanted kids because of my child abuse. I never wanted kids... And I had domestic violence on myself of Paul because it's like you don't want to ever have kids and all that and he wouldn't let me take the contraceptive pill and it's like, "If you take the contraceptive pill, I'll kick you out," and all of that, out of this Department of Housing, because he owned the lease... I had nowhere to go. He said he would kick me out if I took the pill and he got me pregnant, sexual assault... I had the child but I was all messed up. I was really all messed up. It's like you feel as though the child is like a demon. It's taken over your body. I ended up putting the child up for adoption. He's in a good home and he's safe and he's good and he's happy.*

*[About a local man who sexually assaulted her] He seemed quite okay at first and he took me to his place and he had all these kitchen knives all over the place...because he was doing a chef training course, but apparently he's got a background of sexual assault, rape and physical abuse. ... But I got to know him...so I gave him my number, but then he started making prank phone calls and things started to sour because I said no to him...and the next day he got me and there were all these kitchen knives scattered on the floor and on the tables and the lounge and I don't know whether that's called rape. I don't know... I said no. ... I got an AV - all I could do was get an AVO out on him. An AVO, and he breached that a few times... At the time, he had eight AVOs against him. Now he's got more than 16. More than 16.*

### **About reporting violence Linda said:**

*Well, the problem is I've got a problem that I don't stand up - now I realise I don't stand up for myself.*

*[about telling the police] That was good. It was nerve wracking. It was really nerve wracking because then you've got to go through the private details and it's a bit yukky. It's a bit horrible.*

*Department of Housing said to ring the police to get a statement about what happened and all that. It's explaining the details can be a bit tough. It's like you've got to say it over again what happened and all of that and you feel just so angry and why is this happening and all this and you feel not right. Dirty.*

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