

Statement Addendum

Client Name: Shirleen Taylor
Date of Birth: 31/08/1973
Care Setting: adopted illegally- Mr and Mrs Ian and Elizabeth Taylor
Dates: 1975 PERTH COURT
Persons Involved:

Full Statement

I was very young when I was taken from my parents due to my mum struggling at the time. I was initially placed in foster care for a few weeks, and I was told that I was supposed to return home. However, that never happened. Instead, I was taken from my foster parents without proper explanation or consent and placed with an adoptive family through Trinity Church. This family were Protestant, while I was Catholic, and from the very beginning I was treated differently because of this.

As I grew older, I came to understand that I had been placed into this adoptive family illegally, without the consent of my biological family. I believe that what happened to me amounts to being trafficked as a child through the adoption agency connected to the church. I have since learned that the organisation linked to this has faced serious allegations relating to people trafficking, which has only reinforced my belief that what happened to me was wrong and unlawful.

Living with my adoptive family, I was treated very differently from others in the household. I was made to feel separate and isolated. They would often say things like “the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree,” which made me feel like I was being judged and blamed for my background. There was another child in the home who had been adopted before me, and he did not accept me. He would bully me, and this behaviour was allowed to continue. I was treated differently to him, and it was clear that he was favoured over me.

I was not allowed to see my biological family, and all contact was stopped. I was even told that my mum had died, which caused me deep confusion and emotional pain. When I asked questions, I was ignored or dismissed. I was already struggling badly with my mental health, but this was not taken seriously. Instead, the focus was placed on forcing me to follow their religious beliefs. I was made to attend Protestant church services regularly, despite being Catholic, and I was made to read religious materials that did not reflect my identity. This was very distressing for me, as my faith was one of the only connections I had to my biological family.

I was also made to give money to the church, which added to the feeling that I was being used rather than cared for. When I tried to speak up or ask for help within the church, I felt ignored. I felt judged and looked down on, as though I was not wanted there. This made me withdraw further into myself.

At home, physical punishment was common. While I understand that some level of discipline may have been

seen as normal at the time, what I experienced went beyond that. I was restrained in ways that caused me pain. I was held down, sometimes with someone sitting on me, restricting my breathing and causing severe distress. At the time, I believed this was normal, but looking back, I now understand how harmful and abusive it was.

My adoptive mother was older, and I believe she had very old-fashioned views in the way she treated and spoke to me. However, that does not take away from the fact that I was treated differently, spoken to harshly, and made to feel less than others. I was a young girl trying to grow up and understand the world, but instead I was made to feel isolated, unwanted, and emotionally unsupported.

I was excluded from family activities and conversations. I was not included in normal family life, and I never felt loved or cared for in the way that I believe a child should be. I was often left out and made to feel like I did not belong. I was told directly and indirectly that I was unwanted, and over time I came to believe this.

I have tried to speak out about what happened to me, but I feel that no one wants to listen or help. I know that my placement into this family was wrong, and even my paperwork supports this. I feel that I was failed by everyone who was supposed to protect me.

The impact of this has been lifelong. I have suffered from being segregated, bullied, and emotionally isolated. I do not feel a sense of identity or belonging, and I struggle deeply with not knowing where I truly come from. This has caused long-term emotional damage.

As a result of everything I experienced, I now suffer from anxiety, depression, and symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. I find it very difficult to build relationships or trust people. I struggle with feelings of worthlessness and rejection, and these experiences have affected every part of my life. I feel that my whole life has been shaped and damaged by what I went through, and I continue to live with the impact of it every day.