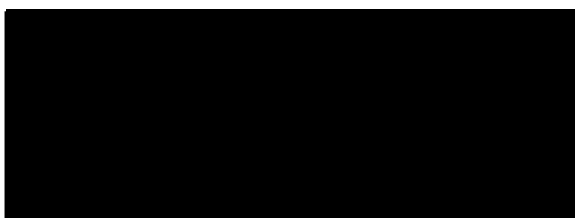


INQUIRY INTO THE HANDLING OF CHILD  
ABUSE BY RELIGIOUS AND OTHER  
ORGANISATIONS

SUBMISSION BY

MAIREAD ASHCROFT



MAIREAD ASHCROFT

[REDACTED]

STATEMENT OF EVENTS against Br. Bernard Hartman, Marianists and the Catholic Church

Written 6<sup>th</sup> September 2011

6/8/1964 - I was born in Nth Ireland UK.

28/5/1966 - Arrived in Australia. Lived in an Immigration Hostel Brooklyn.

27/11/67 - Sean, younger brother born

1967~68 - Moved from the hostel and lived in friends homes until [REDACTED] was built.

1968~74 - Lived at [REDACTED].

1970 - Started school at Annunciation Primary school Brooklyn

1973 - Brian, oldest brother, started secondary school at St Pauls College (all boys secondary school) Nth Altona, approximately 400mt from [REDACTED].

Brian told Br. Bernard Hartman about my fathers (Sean McLaughlin) violent behavior at home.

Br. Bernard Hartman spoke briefly to my parent about Brians behavior at school and the fact that Brian attributed it to my fathers' violent behavior. The problem was shrugged off and Br. Bernard Hartman befriended my parents.

Br. Bernard Hartman became our Family babysitter.

Br. Bernard Hartman invited Brian and me to St Pauls College on Saturdays for tutoring. I would be given arts and craft material to use as I wished. I was always given praise for my work by Br. Bernard Hartman. I liked him a lot. This would take place in his bed room which was attached to the school as were the other Marianist Brothers rooms. These special Saturdays were supposedly to give my pregnant mother a rest. Sean remained at home. I was 8 years old.

25/7/73 - Patricia, young sister born

Tutoring continued but Br Bernard Hartman would send Brian to various rooms in different buildings around the school to find books and other school equipment. During this time Br. Bernard Hartman showed me photographs of naked children which he said that he had taken. He offered me 50c if I would take off all of my clothes and let him take a photo of me. I said that I already got money for my

weekly allowance and didn't need any more money. I was told not to tell anyone because my father would be angry if he found out and "You know what happens when your dad gets angry, Don't You? "

1974 - While alone in Br. Bernard Hartmans bedroom I was constantly shown photos and other media which contained pictures of naked women and children. I was asked to point to the "rude" parts. He claimed that he felt tingly.

6/1974 - We moved house to [REDACTED], approximately 5km away from St Pauls College.

Brian continued to attend St Pauls. Sean and I now went to St Marys Altona

Br. Bernard Hartman continued to baby sit us in our new home. It was here that his attention became physical. Massaging, stroking and caressing me on the outside of my clothes and bedding first and then weeks later under my clothes while I was lying on my bed. This then escalated to genital touching. He asked me if it felt good. I said yes.

Br. Bernard Hartman then became more brazen. He came to my bedroom asked me to take off my pants and sit in the middle of the lounge room floor with a pillow over my knees. The other children were in bed. I was asked to spread my legs. He then put petroleum jelly on his fingers and penetrated my vagina. He raped me first with 1 then 2 fingers. He asked me if it felt good. I was confused at this question. It didn't hurt so I said yes. I have only vague memories of other abuse involving penetration. One involved Br. Bernard Hartman putting petroleum jelly onto the handle of a hair brush while standing in my bedroom. I remember nothing else of this incident.

I was often given gifts and art materials by Br. Bernard Hartman and he also helped me with my homework. I can remember many instances at these times where there would be sexual innuendo, sly touching and sleazy looks when I was in the presence of others including my parents but I always pretended that nothing was wrong. He told me, in front of my parents, that when on a recent holiday in Africa a bug had swum into his penis. When my parents left the room he asked me if I wanted to see where the bug swam in

This abuse continued during my 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> years.

1975 - The final time that Br. Bernard Hartman came into my bed room was near the end of 1975. My door was closed and he quietly opened it. I was wearing a t-shirt and my jeans were at my ankles. I quickly pulled them up and called out my brother Brians name. I had noticed my first pubic hair a few days earlier and knew that it wasn't right for boys to look at girls pubic hair, and that included Br Bernard Hartman. Brian yelled back from across the hall and Br. Bernard Hartman left my room leaving the door open and never touched me again. I was 11 years old

1977 - I began my 1st of 5 years at Mount St Josephs Girls College, Altona (all girls secondary school). Every year the boys from St. Pauls would have a social dance with the girls from Mount St Josephs. I did not want to attend the form 1 social for fear of encountering Br Bernard Hartman again as the social was held on school grounds at the St Pauls hall. I became so stressed and anxious that I

vomited while dressing for the dance. My Mother was very angry with me because she thought I was putting it on again and she had spent a lot of money on my dress.

1978 - When the form 2 social arrived also being held at the St Pauls hall, my mother said that I must attend when I told her that I didn't want to go. My solution was to steal alcohol from my parents bar. It was easily accessible and in abundance so they never missed it. After this I began drinking alcohol on a regular basis to get my self out of the front door.

Face to face confession was introduced into the Catholic Church. There was no way that I was going into a room with a priest on my own with no witnesses.

1979 - My mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. I gave up sport and part time work and became the family care person. During this time I missed about 2 months of school in bits and pieces. I found it difficult to be an adult and a child at the same time. My mother took about 18 months to recover fully.

1980 - Stopped drinking and joined the Altona Lifesaving club. I focused on my health. I trained very hard and won an Australia Day Award for achievement in sport.

1981 - Started dating Graeme Lauder. I was introduced to marijuana. I started drinking again.

1982 - I was out one day and when I came home Brother Bernard Hartman was sitting on our couch with Patricia on his knee. She was about 7 years old. I walked up to them both and took Patricia out of his arms without saying a word. I took her to the beach across the road and watched for him to leave before we came back home. I was 17-18 years old. My 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday I split up with Graeme Lauder. 2 weeks later I had a new boyfriend. Mike Walsh, 10 years my senior.

1983 - I disclosed the abuse to my parents but there was no reaction from either of them.

2/1984 - I became engaged to my boyfriend Mike Walsh. I traveled overseas for a holiday on my own.

12/1985 - Split up with Mike and went on a 6 month bender of alcohol, drugs and sex. I worked in the night club industry holding down 3 positions 6 days a week. All of my vices were at my fingertips.

4/1986 - I traveled overseas on my own again. Began my apprenticeship as a cook and met my first husband Graehame Mackinnon, 13 years my senior. Although I was drinking heavily I continued to be successful at work. I was recommended for a job at the Hotel Windsor Melbourne. I moved out of home and into a flat in Williamstown with Graehame. He has 2 children from a previous relationship.

9/1989 - Married Graehame. I fell pregnant. I miscarried. I gave up drugs and alcohol.

5/12 /90 - Jessie and Lachlan were born.

3/1994 - Jessie and Lachlan diagnosed with kidney disease. I temporarily separated from Graehame while I was Pregnant with Matilda.

26/1/93 - Matilda was born. Graehame and I bought a house at [REDACTED]

15/7/94 - Campbell was born

4/8/96 - I split up with Graehame Mackinnon

5/8/96 - I was diagnosed with level 2 malignant melanoma and had 3 months of treatment

6/8/97 - I was diagnosed with migraine

1998 - I was feeling physically unfit to continue the demanding work in the hospitality industry. I went back to T.A.F.E at William Angliss Melbourne to study Nutrition and Food Technology.

6/1999 - My children attended St. Marys Altona and Jessie and Lachlan were making their First Holy Communion. I had not been to confession since I was 14. You must go to confession before being able to take communion. I spoke to Sr. Eyvonne Harte, pastoral care worker about my predicament and about the abuse from Br Bernard Hartman. She told me not to talk to any one about what had happened to me in case I might distress someone who may have been through a similar thing but couldn't cope. This statement feel that if I spoke out and someone committed suicide that it would be my fault. Sr Eyvonne contacted Sr Angela Ryan from Towards Healing. I was found eligible to entre the Towards Healing counseling program with Shane wall. I don't remember what his qualifications were.

5/10/99 - While under the council of Shane Wall I wrote a letter to Br Jo Kamis and to Br Bernard Hartman.

3/11/99 - Br Jo Kamis reassured me that Br Bernard Hartman was no longer in ministry and did not have contact with women and children. I was to find via articles and photos on the internet in 2011 that Br Jo Kamis was lying to me.

Br Bernard Hartman wrote me an apology letter and an admission of guilt.

I believed that the church would process Br Bernard Hartman through the criminal system because in the book that I was given "Towards Healing. Principals and Procedures in responding to complaints against personnel of the Catholic Church of Australia December 2000"

Pg.12, 37.3 "All church personnel shall comply with the requirements for mandatory reporting of child abuse that exist in some states / territories ,and state or territory law regarding the reporting of knowledge of a criminal offence must be observed The appropriate church authority shall also be notified of any such report."

No action was taken against Br Bernard Hartman. No reparation was offered. I was now feeling spiritually abused. I was raised to believe that the church would protect its followers and humanity. The counseling was only a peace keeping exercise. I was still heavily into the trust and teachings of the Catholic Church, there for under there suggestive influence. I understand now that the counseling that I attended with Shane Wall was a form of manipulation. I attended counseling with Janet Wilkinson at Pier St Medical Centre.

I began a relationship with my current husband 10 years my senior.

2000 – I was unable to complete my studies due to the physical and emotional distress of coming to terms with the fact that I had been pushed aside by the Catholic Church. I pulled the Children out of St Marys Altona and out of the church and from then on they attended public school and never went back to church.

2001 – Married John Ashcroft. He has 3 adult children. We moved to a bigger house at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I was diagnosed with Fibromyalgia. I had been suffering with symptoms since 1994.

I was medicated with Cymbalta (anti-depressant) to be seen as a long term approach in combating depression and pain.

I had a hysterectomy because of heavy bleeding and pain. I attended Olympia Rehabilitation hospital for pain management for 4 weeks because the surgery had triggered the fibromyalgia. I had my gall bladder removed and once again the fibromyalgia was triggered so I attended Olympia Rehab again this time for 3 weeks. That totaled to 9 weeks away from my children.

6/1/2003 - I gave my statement to Senior Constable J.G Charlesworth at the Sunshine police station. I wanted to press criminal charges against Br Bernard Hartman but was unable because although the crimes were committed in Australia, he is an American citizen living in America. I was told that he would be arrested by customs if he arrived in Australia. There was a direct correlation found to Fibromyalgia and the extreme levels of stress that I had carried since my abuse from Hartman. I received \$7000.00 from Victims of Crime to cover the medical costs incurred to that date (psychiatry, medications, rehabilitation, supports and aids to help with mobility). I attended group counseling at C.A.S.A. in Footscray for 15 weeks.

7/03 – Had been seeing Janet Wilkinson Psychologist, for some time and was still very troubled that Br Hartman may still be able to harm children. No Reply.

8/2004 - John and I took over a business, Take away Food shop, in Altona. I was supposed to be working part time but finances required me to work longer hours. My health deteriorated further and I lost a great deal of weight. I was surviving on pain killers and found it difficult to walk some days.

2005 - John worked full time as a truck driver and I ran and worked the shop 7 days a week. I became increasingly ill due to exhaustion with many fibromyalgia flare ups. My sister, Patricia was pregnant with her first child.

I attended counseling (Janet Wilkinson) with my sister because I had to explain to her that when her child was born, not to push me into a relationship with him because I still had an uneasy feeling around small children.

8/2006 - The business was closed and we had to sell all of our assets including our home to pay debts owing. John and I separated for 1 year and 2 months in which time we worked on our marriage and attended counseling.

12/2007 - John and I moved back in together at [REDACTED]

1/2009 - I began to have strange dizzy episodes. I went back to the Rehabilitation Centre for 4 weeks to get on top of the extreme pain and fatigue from fibromyalgia flare ups that I was suffering with due to the stress of having, at this time, undiagnosed seizures, confusion and memory loss and trying to hold down my job at Victoria University.

I was cooking in a Vic Uni child care centre where I was also expected to go into the rooms to care for the children. I told my co-coordinator about my abuse as I was being triggered on a regular basis.

9/2009 - Diagnosed with Petit mal seizures, epilepsy, and treated with medication.

18/1 /10 - Sergeant Robert Stanwick and another officer from the Altona Nth police station came to my home and told me that the extradition laws between America and Australia had changed. He asked me if I wanted to pursue the earlier charges against Br Bernard Hartman. I had a seizure. My father was called and when I recovered I said yes.

6/2010 - Diagnosed with dissociative disorder and psychogenic seizures at the epilepsy unit at the Royal Melbourne Hospital epilepsy unit as a result of my childhood trauma of sexual abuse. I was very, very distressed. Psychiatric treatment was recommended. I began to see Dr Francoice Muller Robbie in Williamstown for treatment twice a week. During this time my level of distress was very high. I found it so difficult to talk about the abuse that I avoided it by talking about the problems that I was having with my parents and the issues of my fathers violent behavior in my childhood through to my early 20's. Seizures were preventing me from driving and I was relying on public transport. One day I was so distressed that I was frightened to be at home on my own after counseling so I went straight to my doctors and waited there for 2 hours until someone from home could be with me.

2/2011 - Dr. Muller Robbie was no longer practicing at this time. I began to see Shona Todge ,a psychologist in Williamstown for counseling weekly and I began attending C.A.S.A. in Footscray again fortnightly with a councilor Luciana. This continued until I needed surgery in July to be resumed when I recovered from surgery.

11/7/11 - I saw Dr. Terrence Lim at the Rehabilitation Centre for pain management but he advised me that until my stress levels were alleviated the rehabilitation would not work for me. I was recommended to see Dr Toby Sacks, a psychiatrist specializing in pain management. I had been seeing him for three sessions at the rehabilitation centre fortnightly but he advised that at this time his form of psychiatry

was virtually useless to me as my life stress was so incredibly high. I was prescribed Seroquel (anti-psychotic) in order to stop me acting out my nightmares.

I continue to attend counseling with Shona Todge and C.A.S.A .

3/12/11 – Media in the age about my story

4/12/11- More victims and a witness of Br Hartman's come forward and 2 eventually give statements

6/12/11 – Vicar General, Bishop Les Tomlinson, Melbourne Archdiocese, gives a public statement that there were no reports of my abuse and no complaints received. Was he calling me a liar? How did I receive counsel from Towards Healing without putting in a report? The Archdiocese also gives a media statement.

Today – I am in pain every day from the effects of Fibromyalgia. I can no longer drive due to seizures.

I can no longer work as a chef due to seizures. I am constantly triggered but have worked extremely hard over many years to come to terms with my fears. I no longer find it difficult to talk about my pain and abuse.

**IMPACT STATEMENT** : Mairead Ashcort.

6<sup>th</sup> September 2011

**Anxiety**: I suffered strongly with anxiety in my childhood and early teens. I would shake and vomit even at the thought of having to socialize until I began to drink alcohol. I would get instant relief as the alcohol soothed me.

Today I hide in the kitchen of any party and find work to do so that I don't have to socialize. In an organized group setting I will busy myself with a position in the organization to keep me from having to socialize. I use avoidance of human contact by becoming involved in incidental work as a protective tool. People just think that I am very community conscious. I avoid going to parties, I avoid visiting peoples' houses and people rarely visits mine, even family. I keep people at a distance. I have times when I go to a supermarket to shop but turn around and go home because I can't face the activity of life.

**Depression**: I have gone without showering for a week on more than one occasion and stayed in bed causing fungal infections to grow on my skin and sores develop on my head. I have locked myself away in my bedroom only to emerge briefly to do the most basic of house hold tasks. Some times I have not even been able to manage that. I have been out in public and wished that instead I was in a dark cupboard with the door shut tight.

**Disappointment** : I believed that when I spoke to Sr. Eyvonne Hart about Br Bernard Hartman sexually abusing me when I was a defenseless child that she and the Catholic Church would be thankful to me for bringing to their attention a pedophile in their midst. I believed that the Catholic Church would want to make an example of such a man and bring justice to me and to themselves. I believed that Br. Bernard Hartman was taking advantage of his position in the church and would be dealt with accordingly. How



naïve was I? How brain washed was I? All of the teachings that were drummed into me about truth, compassion and love have been proven wrong. My life beliefs were wrong.

**Distrust:** My thoughts are the only thoughts that I know to be true. I know that my actions have no ulterior motive. I can only trust myself. Neither my husband nor my children have my full trust, I can't read their minds. How can I trust strangers, make and keep friends when I don't trust those closest to me

**Drugs and Alcohol:** I was drinking excessively and smoked marijuana and took other drugs from the age of 14- 17 then again from 18-25 to cope with the isolation that I felt from the rest of the world. I could get myself out of the front door after a drink with out shaking or vomiting. After a few more I could be sociable with another human being. With a few more again I lost all inhibition and used my sexuality as a weapon.

**Emotionless:** I don't laugh and I don't cry. I don't get angry or excited. My emotion is in a place where it is non threatening to me. No where. As a result of this I protect my self from the emotional pain that I suffer with daily. This means that I also miss out on the joys of life, frightened that my joy will tip over into emotional pain because I have let myself be vulnerable to emotion. The pain that I feel manifests into physical pain. I have been holding my body like a clenched fist since childhood resulting in the diagnosis of fibromyalgia, head aches and relentless tiredness. My physical and emotional pain is invisible to the outside world except for John and the kids.

**Family:** My children have had to grow up with an emotionally disengaged parent. They have seen me in extreme physical pain, and have had to deal with me lying in my bed for days at a time. When they were pre-teens I over did everything from birthday parties, volunteer school duties to being the Lacrosse team manager. I was Super Mum. Now that they are older and can look after themselves I have been absent many times at their sporting events and crowded presentation nights. Episodes of depression and pain come and go more often now that I don't have the pressure on me to be everything to my kids. When I am feeling "normal" I am the best mother that I can be. Although I am friendly with everyone and I think every one likes me, I never socialize with other parents or co workers. I have struggled with the difficulty of physical and emotional intimacy especially with my first husband. I could not communicate with Graehame for fear of rejection. He saw that fear as permission to behave any way that he pleased leading to his dominance over me. My children witnessed me being treated like a door mat and Graehame began to treat the children the same way. I was not going to allow this to happen. I have given my children the best childhood that I possibly could hiding my daily battles with the realities of life by throwing my self into mother hood with great gusto. I hid the enormity of the anguish that I felt during Birthday parties by making them the best parties possible keeping myself too busy to socialize with the mothers who were there.

My current husband, John, deals every day with my quiet escapes to my room and our lack of a social life with others. John has also experienced hurt and sorrow in his life and he uses those experiences to show kindness and understanding to me and my children. He wakes me from my nightmares. He

disentangles my fingers when they are clenched into a fist for no apparent reason. He validates my feelings .He takes over when I can't cope allowing me time to recover.

**Frustration:** I am now in my 13<sup>th</sup> year of trying to have Br Bernard Hartman put into jail for the crimes that he committed against me as a child. 13 years of uncertainty and shattered hopes. The knowledge that he is still a representative of the Catholic Church and that he is possibly harming children as we speak in excruciatingly painful for me. I just can't understand why an organization, such as the Catholic Church or any organization would ignore the harm done to me and other children. Br. Bernard has admitted his guilt in a letter to me. Br. Joseph Kamis has lied to me and stated that Br Bernard Hartman is "no longer in ministry and does not associate with women and children." I know that this is a lie.

**Guilt:** When my abuse stopped, while still a child, I felt guilt that Br Bernard Hartman would be sexually abusing another child in place of me. Even when I disclosed at 19, my guilt was not relieved because of the fear that children were still being abused by Br. Bernard Hartman. I knew that I wasn't the first so I was pretty certain that I wouldn't be the last. There used to be an annual community initiative on television where you could dial a phone number and report a pedophile. During this time my nerves would be right on the edge and then as the announcements ended I would be wracked with guilt because I didn't call and potentially stop Br Bernard Hartman from abusing other children.

**Health :** For almost 40 years I have suffered with nausea, stomach cramps, migraines, panic attacks and depression. For 17 years I have suffered with fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome, dissociative disorder and temporal mandibular joint syndrome. For over 2 years I have been suffering with psychogenic seizures. I have been advised by my doctor in January 2010, not to drive due to the danger of the seizures so that has greatly contributed to my already isolated life. I enjoyed my time driving my children to work or school and sporting activities. That was a time when they would talk to me about their lives. The stress of first, keeping the abuse secret and then dealing with not being able to take action on Br. Bernard Hartman acknowledgment of guilt, has caused life long mental and physical pain and anguish causing my quality of life to be greatly diminished.

**Hyper-vigilance:** I expect everyone that I meet to have an ulterior motive. When my children were born I became involved as a committee member or equivalent in every group activity that I joined. I needed to know every person involved in the group and I needed to have some authority over them. In doing this, some of my anxiety of having other people around my children was alleviated but it was replaced with a different kind of stress. I was exhausted taking on roles that I had neither the time nor finances to spare. I was lucky to get a job as a childcare centre cook and was able to take the children to work with me. I was able to keep an eye on them most of the time.

**Identity loss:** During and after the sexual abuse I no longer wanted to be a girl. I asked that everyone call me Jimmy. I thought that if I looked like a boy, behaved like a boy and called myself a boy, that I would be safe. I participated in male oriented activities and I did them very competitively. I got into physical fights with boys, trained as a lifesaver and competed against boys, and eventually became a chef, like a boy where I was often sexually harassed by my co-workers. As an adult woman I could no longer be a boy. I then used my sexuality as my weapon, destroying any sense of self that I had left. The only time

that I feel in control is when I am the mother. This doesn't only mean being mother to my own children. It also means protecting and comforting any person, even strangers, whom I thought needed mothering. I have entered dangerous situations to protect others and have been physically hurt along the way. I have used different personalities to cope with different situations. I don't really know and have never known who "Me" is.

**Inadequateness**: Every thing that I have entered into, work, sport ,parenting, marriage, I have done my absolute best and more but that is never enough . I focus on where I have failed and I lack ownership of the good things that I achieve in life, except for my wonderful children. I have very low enjoyment on a day to day basis but no one would know it because I keep my emotions on a safe level always. I have allowed myself to be treated with disrespect and I have been bullied and belittled because I didn't think that I was worth fighting for. I don't celebrate my own birthday and I did not have photographers at either wedding.

**Insecurity**: I can not trust my own instinct. Feelings that I have about right or wrong, safe or dangerous have been deliberately manipulated leaving me with confused and disastrous outcomes. My feelings of self worth have been so low that I have allowed my self to be treated as less than in my personal and professional life.

**Self Harm**: My problems with self harm began when I was about 12. It started by pulling my hair out 1 strand at a time causing a sore on my scalp. I would pick it and make it bleed and then hide any evidence by eating my own skin. I then started biting myself on my wrists until I bled and ate my skin. I bit my finger nails until they bled and took a needle and thread in my right hand and sewed the tips of my fingers of the left hand together. When I was about 14 I cut my wrist along the vein to see what would happen but I missed the vein. When I developed breasts I stuck needles into my skin until I bled causing numerous scars. I now eat the skin on the inside of my mouth until it bleeds. I constantly have wounds that are detectable to no one but me. I feel no pain while cause myself these injuries. I do feel pain afterwards. I have never tried to kill myself but I have often fantasized about how peaceful it would be to feel nothing. I have been taken by ambulance to hospital for accidentally taking too many pain killers. I just wanted the pain to stop.

**Shame**: Br. Bernard Hartman forced me to behave in a manner in which I felt morally uncomfortable and then he gave me possession of the behaviors by giving me a choice as to what the outcome would be. Br Bernard Hartman said that my parents would not believe me and that I would make my father angry. My choices were A. I could tell my parents, and risk a beating, or B.I could go along silently and allow Br. Bernard Hartman to sexually abuse me. I felt powerless. I chose the abuse. I now owned the abuse and the shame and humiliation that went along with it.

As an adult I was very confused about my own feelings for my children. When I saw their beautiful baby bodies I worried that the warm love that I had for them and was inappropriate. I wore gloves to dress them and change their nappies for fear that my skin might touch the skin of their genital area.

**Spiritual abuse:** I was raised in the Catholic Church. I struggled with some of their teachings but was led to believe that this was my failing, my lack of faith. I no longer follow any religion. This has left a huge gap in my life. It has also allowed me to understand the strong hold that the church had on me, by making me feel inferior as a human being. When I went through the Towards Healing program I was given the book "Principles and procedures in Responding to complaints of abuse in the Catholic Church Australia 2000". At the very beginning of the book pg3 no12 it states "a number of offenders are disturbed persons and some have serious psychological problems. A significant number were themselves victims of abuse in their early lives". When I first read this in 1999 I actually felt sorrow for these perpetrators and I didn't want to cause any more distress. After leaving the church, having a chance to stand back and really look at the situation I realized that I was being emotionally manipulated. There is no excuse for what happened to me.

**Triggers:** There are many, many triggers in my life. I have to restrain my feelings to cope every day. Simple articles in the supermarket, having anything put over my face, open doors, and television programs especially The Pink Panther and H.R Puffin stuff, music, movies, smells, Egyptian paraphernalia, religious icons and people, crowds and places can send me into a cold sweat. I shake, feel sick or sometimes have seizures. I often have such strong feelings that I need to escape from the room or building that I'm in. Any where, any time I will feel distressed because of a simple reaction to one of my senses.