

## SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN – ONE WOMAN’S HARROWING ACCOUNT

On November 16<sup>th</sup>, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd officially apologised to The Forgotten Australians; those nearly 500,000 adult survivors who as children, suffered often scandalous abuse under the guise of ‘care’, at the hands of cruel and callous staff in orphanages, children’s homes and government institutions across Australia.

Many of these children suffered lasting feelings of abandonment and were left physically and psychologically scarred. Some turned to a life of serious crime, some had to remain in permanent institutional care while many turned to a life of drugs or committed suicide; too traumatised to bear the burden of shame and unresolved psychological problems.

Among the survivors is Sharyn Killens, better known as singer and entertainer **Sharyn Crystal**, who suffered torment from the beginning of her life. Her biography ***The Inconvenient Child***, is not all pain and heartbreak though; in fact it joyous and inspiring but she has also relived the horror of her childhood, providing a harrowing no-holds-barred account of the degrading treatment young girls were forced to endure in institutional care and government run institutions.

In 1950, baby Sharyn was rescued from neglectful foster care by visiting champion African American boxer Freddie Dawson and taken to live in a ‘party house’ in Sydney’s red light district of Kings Cross, only to be abandoned at age five, in a convent-orphanage to suffer the cruelty of a sadistic nun.

Next, having been deemed “uncontrollable” by a juvenile court, at fifteen she was sentenced to six month’s detention in the notorious Parramatta Girls Home, then transported for 150 days of hard labour and systematic, dehumanising treatment in Hay Institution for Girls. She had committed no crime.

Born in 1948, Killens was the product of a blue-eyed blonde Sydney woman and a visiting African-American serviceman. Her mother struggled with the dilemma of what do with her at a time when it was scandalous to have an illegitimate baby, let alone a black child, so the two continued a vexed relationship until Sharyn was aged 40.

Finally, under duress her mother revealed the identity of the father Sharyn had been desperately seeking to know for forty years. Thus began her eight year quest to find him and her African-American heritage.

***The Inconvenient Child*** charts Sharyn Killens’ life from its horrendous beginning, through her colourful and sometimes desperate times in Kings Cross, her success in the Australian music industry, to the eventual discovery of her remarkable African-American family from the Deep South of America and her American slavery roots.

Sharyn’s first-hand account is alarming, but her determination that the story be told is testament to her courage and strength.

To arrange an interview with Sharyn Killens and co-Author Lindsay Lewis, or for more information, please contact: Lindsay Lewis at Miracle Publishing on: (02) 9460-8050 or 0429-998-885

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