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The Homies

Four Corners explores how the childhood experience of "the homies" continues to intensely affect their lives.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT, REPORTER: Scattered around Australia are crumbling structures that once housed the children society didn't want. These were children's homes, run by the most respectable bodies in the land - States, charities, churches, the Salvation Army. But for many older Australians, the memories are intensely painful.

TRISH PASCOE: The bitter, lonely years.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Why do you call it that?

TRISH PASCOE: Because they were bitter and lonely. That's the only thing I can use to describe it.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Some homes were well-run. In others, abuse turned children into angry, sometimes criminal, adults.

MAN IN SHADOW: To be truthful, I cannot look at a 13- or 14-year-old and not think, "I wouldn't mind that".

BEVERLEY FITZGERALD, PRESIDENT, QLD CHILDREN SERVICES TRIBUNAL: Its repercussions are enormous and they ripple out to every facet of a person's life, and we have to start looking at that.

JOHN DALZIEL, THE SALVATION ARMY: That trust has been betrayed and to the Australian public now, I apologise.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Tonight on Four Corners, the secret history of the extraordinary cruelty inflicted on children in care.

NEWSREEL: The Salvation Army is a strong supporter of the Scouting movement as a means of building healthy bodies and minds - ideals that are carried through to their schools for children from broken homes. For these youngsters, school is home.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, tens of thousands of boys and girls from broken homes were dispatched to institutions around Australia.

(PHOTOGRAPH LABELLED 'INDOOROPILLY')

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: The damage some homes caused is still there in the lives of middle-aged Australians like Lewis Blayse.

LEWIS BLAYSE: It was out in the middle of nowhere, which is where most of these places were - out in the middle of nowhere.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Lewis Blayse went into care in 1950 when he was five months old. His parents simply couldn't cope.

LEWIS BLAYSE: My mother was about fifth-generation Australian, uh...English, Welsh. Year 6 education, uh...schizophrenia. My father came out as a refugee during World War II from Yugoslavia. The whole village was shot, eventually. Uh...he became a canecutter. He had two years education.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Lewis Blayse's fate was typical of an age when large numbers of children were institutionalised through no fault of their own, with no choice where they went. Placing them in a home run by a church or charity was seen as a safe, inexpensive option.

BEVERLEY FITZGERALD: Children placed in care was usually an economic motivation rather than a child development or child nurturing or child protection, and that the state found often the cheapest way to look after children.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Life in the hundreds of institutions around Australia was ordered and impersonal. At the age of nine, Lewis Blayse was sent to Indooroopilly - a Salvation Army home in Queensland where boys were referred to by numbers.

LEWIS BLAYSE: I was number 32. I'm sorry. I'm going to get upset if I hold that for too long. Number 32.

WALLY McLEOD: I was sent to Indooroopilly, supposedly for psychiatric treatment, of which I never got.

BARRY MASLEN: I was deemed a juvenile delinquent, and my single mother at the time couldn't cope with me.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Wally McLeod and Barry Maslen share memories of life in care. Their stories of life at Indooroopilly tally with Lewis Blayse's accounts.

WALLY McLEOD: You would get up, you would have breakfast, you would collect a lunch wrapped in rag, with dry mince, and you would be marched to school with an officer in a line of three rows.

LEWIS BLAYSE: The lining up, the...the whistles, the toilets, the lights-out time. You know, it was just military and...and your bunks are sort of like, you know, this far apart. No...not...no personal possessions. Spartan.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: The chores were as nothing compared with the discipline handed out by the officers in charge.

LEWIS BLAYSE: If you spoke in your own language, you got six cuts on each hand. If you spoke during meals, six cuts on each hand. If you stepped out of line, 'cause you had to line up everywhere, six cuts on each hand.

BARRY MASLEN: I ran away from home with another boy. And...the police caught us at Eumundi and drove us back to the home. On the way back, they asked why we ran away, and we told them and they said they would look into the matter, but I don't think they ever did because nothing changed. When we got back to the home... Um...we were caned 6 times on each hand - 6 times on the knuckles - and 18 times on the backside - bare...bare behind.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Sometimes the pain endured was as much psychological as physical. Lewis Blayse was one of the cleverest boys at Indooroopilly, and he helped organise an escape attempt. When the boys were caught, he had to watch while his mates were brutally punished.

LEWIS BLAYSE: Boys had been escaping, which is part of what you do in boys' homes, and when they brought them back, you know, they were sort of stripped naked, beaten with a bloody rubber hose over a vaulting horse, and we all had to stand around and watch. You know, it was, like...ridiculous. It just got worse and worse - you know, beating people...you know.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: That's completely unacceptable, isn't it?

JOHN DALZIEL: Absolutely. There is no justification for it whatsoever in any circumstances and, even at the time, the Salvation Army did not condone that.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Lewis Blayse lives alone in a ramshackle house in the country. His years in children's homes left him with post-traumatic stress disorder. Like so many former state wards, he's a loner. His marriage has broken down, even though his wife Sylvia remains his greatest supporter. On one thing they both agree - the emotional price paid by them all has been high.

SYLVIA BLAYSE: There's been a lot of screaming, a lot of fighting, a lot of throwing glasses on the floor, a lot of breaking furniture. That's as violent as we ever got, really. But there's been so much anger in our family. That's really, I guess, the main effect.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Has Lew ever tried to harm himself?

SYLVIA BLAYSE: Yes, he's tried to suicide a number of times.

LEWIS BLAYSE: If anybody is to be compensated, I'd say it was my family, because they, you know... You compensate a breadwinner if he's killed at work or something. If they're psychologically killed...the family should still be compensated.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: In the 1950s and 1960s in Queensland, some boys like Wally McLeod, who the authorities thought wouldn't benefit from a school education, were dispatched instead to a Salvation Army training farm called Riverview. The boys worked from 4:00 in the morning in the dairy, milking cows.

BARRY MASLEN: If you spoke while you were milking, we were flogged with a stockwhip. The stockwhip was used exclusively in the dairy.

WALLY McLEOD: I still have dreams of seeing blood coming from boys' backsides, as we were...we were strap...we were hit from the...we were naked from the waist down when we were punished.

LENEEN FORDE, COMMISSIONER, FORDE INQUIRY: They were maybe more brutal times, but certainly that was not acceptable at any time. To horsewhip a child, for goodness' sakes, no.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Leneen Forde is one of Australia's foremost experts on the abuse of children in state institutions. Four years ago, the former Queensland governor delivered a landmark report into the State's institutional homes. Her investigations came to be known as the Forde Inquiry.

LENEEN FORDE: We had a job to do, and so we had to keep in control and... But the staff on the inquiry - we were all affected by these terrible stories that we heard, and all had the feeling that it could have happened to any one of us or to anybody.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Homes run by many institutions were criticised. One was Riverview, which had a punitive regime.

WALLY McLEOD: All boys would be marched into the recreation room. The boy or the boys that were in trouble would be called out into the centre. They would be made drop their trousers and underpants, bent over with hands touching the toes and they would be given anything up to 10 to 15 of the cane or the strap. And if you left that position, you got extra.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: How would you describe the officers who carried out these punishments?

WALLY McLEOD: Absolute mongrels. I...I can't think of other words for 'em, and these people call themselves Christians.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: There are even more serious allegations. Barry Maslen says he was sexually abused at Riverview.

BARRY MASLEN: While this particular officer was on night duty, he used to come into the dormitory and...he used to pick different boys, but when he chose me, he'd sit beside the bed and he'd rub my leg, eventually working it up, his hand up underneath my pyjama trousers, and fondle my penis. And then he would ask me if I would like a cup of hot Milo or some biscuits or lollies - which is something that was never, ever given to us, and, of course, I said yes. And then once we got to his room, he started fondling me again and I was sodomised and I had oral sex performed on me. And that's how I acquired the name of one of that particular officer's bum boys.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Barry Maslen recalls that there were four other boys who were liable to be abused whenever the officer was on dormitory duty.

Did you talk about it together?

BARRY MASLEN: Yes, we did.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Did you talk about taking any action against him?

BARRY MASLEN: Well, we did, but...we were just frightened of getting the retribution of...of being flogged.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Was he a flogger?

BARRY MASLEN: Oh, yeah. Terrible.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: The last occasion Barry Maslen was abused was at Christmas time. Decades later, the emotional damage done to him by the experience continued to cause havoc.

BARRY MASLEN: One particular Christmas, my wife said, "Why do you make Christmas so hard for us?" And I couldn't tell her, and she said, "Well, either you tell me or we're out of here." So I just wept and wept and wept and I told her, 'cause I had it bottled up inside me for...for...nearly 40, 45 years - 40-odd years.

DR WAYNE CHAMLEY, BROKEN RITES: They cannot hold down jobs, they have major problems with alcohol, they are major users of public housing. Many are on the streets. They trust no-one. They're the classic loners that we see in society.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Lewis Blayse, Wally McLeod and Barry Maslen have all taken their complaints to the Salvation Army. None of them is satisfied with the outcome. Lewis Blayse hasn't been compensated by the Salvation Army for the psychological trauma which he says he suffered at Indooroopilly. Wally McLeod was offered \$5,000, rejected it, and eventually accepted \$20,000.

What did you feel about the fact that they offered you \$5,000 to start with?

WALLY McLEOD: It was humiliation to the...humiliation to the very best. I was devastated.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Barry Maslen lodged a complaint five years ago. The Army's divisional commander, happy that Maslen was now a born-again Christian, told him that the blood of Jesus would cleanse him of his sense of dirtiness and filthiness, and gave him a sincere apology. But when the complaint was passed on to Sydney headquarters, the Salvation Army offered him 10 sessions of counselling.

BARRY MASLEN: I think it was an insult, to be quite honest.

JOHN DALZIEL: There's first of all counselling that takes place so that we can work through the issues, and we don't promise any more at that stage, but as the counselling unfolds and other issues become evident, then we offer help based on that. And if there have been expenses in the past, we offer help with those expenses and, um...even to the tune of legal expenses.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Shouldn't the Salvation Army be making restitution?

JOHN DALZIEL: Where we can make restitution, we have done, and there have been a number of cases where we've done that...but we don't offer carte blanche up front, a fee. That...that's an insult too. What we say is, "We want to work with you on this process."

(PHOTOGRAPH LABELLED 'KALIMNA')

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: It wasn't only home boys who were abused. In 1959, Trish Pascoe arrived at a correctional facility for girls in care in Queensland called Kalimna, which was also run by the Salvation Army. Trish Pascoe was already traumatised. Three younger sisters had died at a very young age, both parents were alcoholics, and her father had been abusing her for years.

TRISH PASCOE: From the time I was about 11, the abuse got really bad for a year - worse than it ever been when I was a little younger, and I used to go out Friday night and Saturday night when he was drunk and sit around in parks and down by the river and stuff like that, waiting for him to go to sleep. And the police picked me up one night and said what am I doing sitting there? Of course, I wouldn't tell 'em. Then, the next day they said, "You're going to court," and I said, "What have I done?" and they said, "You know what you've done." And I thought they meant...what I'd done.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: So, Trish, let me just ask you this - so you thought you were being punished for what your father had done to you?

TRISH PASCOE: (Tearfully) Yes.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: As soon as Trish Pascoe arrived at Kalimna, she was put into solitary confinement.

TRISH PASCOE: I was locked up in a tiny little room. Well, I thought it was two weeks - it might've been a bit less, but I thought it was around about two weeks.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Why did they lock you up?

TRISH PASCOE: Well, when I asked her why she was locking me up, she said so I'd know what it was like and I wouldn't play up or do anything wrong.

BEVERLEY FITZGERALD: A child comes into an institution and it's almost like an orientation session - "This is how we do business here. You are powerless, we are in authority, you will now knuckle down and stop this wickedness and become a good child."

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: For someone who's been abused at home, who's run away from home, who's picked up by the police, is then sent to Kalimna, locked up as soon as she arrives - isn't that a profoundly damaging thing to do to her?

JOHN DALZIEL: I think, if it's done in the way you describe, it would be. I would hope it was never done like that, but if it was, then the Salvation Army can only offer apologies to girls that suffered that.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Veronica Girle shared Trish Pascoe's experience of solitary confinement. In her case, she says, she was locked up for months because she wouldn't own up to stealing two salt shakers which were found in her locker.

VERONICA GIRLE: It was a pitch-dark room the size of an average bedroom with a mattress on the floor, no potty, no water, dark - very dark. They'd bring a tray in three times a day, and those three times a day, you were marched out to the toilet, which was just around the corner. One minute to have a...go to the toilet, four minutes, like, for your shower. Of course, coming out of a dark room only three times a day after five and a half months, you know, you go pretty crazy, which I did do.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: You're telling me you spent five and a half months...?

VERONICA GIRLE: Almost five and a half months.

JOHN DALZIEL: I could only imagine that it was done as a punishment rather than as a treatment. Doesn't justify it. I'm just saying that's the only reason it would've happened.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Veronica Girle and other women from Kalimna told the Forde Inquiry about the long and arduous hours spent working in the laundry.

VERONICA GIRLE: We had to iron starched...very stiff, starched uniforms, and they were really stiff. They had to rattle when they were finished ironing, and they had to have no creases, and you had to do so many a day.

TRISH PASCOE: We just ironed from the time we got there in the morning till it was time to finish in the afternoon.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: How many hours?

TRISH PASCOE: Oh, at least eight and a half.

DR WAYNE CHAMLEY: Children were put into a situation where they were doing unpaid work 30, 40 hours a week. They were supposed to be getting an education. They were not getting any education at all. And these child slaves were just given nothing and at 18 years of age, shown the door - "Out you go, we've got someone else to replace you in the factory or the laundry or out on the farm."

JOHN DALZIEL: The real purpose of that laundry was as part of that custodial sentence that, um...it was more or less expected that the Salvation Army would implement by the State Government.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Were the girls who worked in the laundry paid?

JOHN DALZIEL: No, they weren't.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Were the boys working on the farm paid?

JOHN DALZIEL: No, they weren't.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: After the Forde Inquiry, a group of former Kalimna residents lodged complaints with the Salvation Army. The Army didn't accept Veronica Girle's account of her solitary confinement, but it gave her, and several others, ex gratia payments of \$10,000 - with secrecy clauses attached.

VERONICA GIRLE: To me, it wasn't the money. I wasn't after the money. It was the fact that they should come clean and say, "OK, we did this to these kids."

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: So what did you do next?

VERONICA GIRLE: Well, when they wrote to me and told me they'd talk to me in town, um, I did accept compensation - 'hush money', as I will call it - to be quiet.

JOHN DALZIEL: The Salvation Army is not into hush money at all.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: But the effect of it is to stop them, some of them, talking about those stories.

JOHN DALZIEL: Well, we've never suggested they can't talk about the stories. We've just suggested that we would like them to keep confidential the payments that were made to them, that's all.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, the Salvation Army took charge of 30,000 children in 35 homes around Australia, and it wasn't alone in keeping what went on inside those homes secret.

JOHN CLEARY, AUTHOR, 'SALVO!': The Army were like all the churches and government institutions. I mean, you were in a society which was in denial about sexuality, um, sexuality was repressed. Kids didn't talk about it, adults didn't talk about it. "Children should be seen and not heard." I mean, I have no doubt that, um, you know...that you're talking about a period in which repression was...was the initial instinct.

JOHN DALZIEL: Especially amongst male officers, there was this feeling that tough love was the best love that could be given because it allowed, uh, the young boys to experience for the first time something that was consistent in their lives. There's no getting round it - that there were a significant number of officers who were tough, but they were never authorised to use corporal punishment.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Well, how did they get away with it?

JOHN DALZIEL: Often because the person in charge either did it themselves or turned a blind eye to it.

(PHOTOGRAPH LABELLED 'BEXLEY')

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: But does the Salvation Army have more to answer for than its fair share of horror stories from the Forde Inquiry? In NSW, Kevin Marshall entered the Salvation Army's Bexley Boys' Home when he was six, because his mother couldn't look after him. A few months later, she committed suicide.

KEVIN MARSHALL: I was called into the chapel one morning and told that my mother was dead, um, wasn't coming back to see me. I broke into tears - quite traumatic, obviously. After a while, I was told just to shut up and get on with life, and that was it. Nobody told me what happened to my mother, where she was buried, what arrangements were made for her, nothing. It took me, I think, years. It wasn't until the mid-'80s I managed to track down where her remains were cremated and found out what happened to her.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: As was the custom in Queensland's Salvation Army homes, life at Bexley was strictly regimented.

KEVIN MARSHALL: The showers were, now I think back, I think, extremely bizarre. You'd basically line up in front of your locker, on command, you would strip down to completely naked and then you would file out into the bathroom. Basically you'd line up naked under the guise of one or two Salvation Army personnel and go through a footbath, and then stand in line and go through a shower with seven other boys.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: This man, who doesn't want to be identified, spent ten and a half years at

Bexley. He was left there by his mother when he was five.

MAN IN SHADOW: We were each allocated a number from the day we went in, and every article of clothing or anything that we owned was put...that number was put on.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: What was your number?

MAN IN SHADOW: My number was 68.

(FOOTAGE OF ANOTHER MAN WORKING IN WORKSHOP)

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: This man, too, doesn't wish to be identified. At the age of 10, he was living rough with his older sister and 9-year-old brother after being abandoned in Sydney by their mother. He was picked up by the police, and the two boys were separated from their sister and taken to Bexley, where, he says, his younger brother was raped by an older boy on his first night.

SECOND MAN IN SHADOW: The second night I was there, I was bashed by, um...by one of the officers there. And, um, yeah, welcome to the real world.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Were the officers physically violent towards you?

KEVIN MARSHALL: They were. Yes, they were. Um...again, looking at it as an adult, I suppose it's probably the quickest way of dealing with boys who don't respond to words, but... Yeah, they were. You were bashed, you were hit, and at an early age. I remember being hit about the head, bashed on the arms and the face as well when I was six.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: According to all three men, this kind of cruelty was typical of officers each of them can vividly remember. One in particular stands out - Captain Lawrence Wilson.

MAN IN SHADOW: I had a reputation of having a very fiery tongue, and Wilson didn't like people being called names, so he asked one of the other boys who the main name-caller was, and he told him it was me. And at that stage I hadn't done anything wrong, but I was called up to the office and I was thrashed from head to toe with a cane, only because this boy had said I was the main name-caller.

SECOND MAN IN SHADOW: I was in the dining room and I laughed, and he told me to stop laughing and I couldn't. And then, um, eventually he come up and just punched me right in the side of the head. I fell to the ground. Then he dragged me, kicked me and punched me all the way to his office, caned me about 18, 20 times, threw me out in the corridor and told me to go.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Bexley Boys' Home in the 1970s was presented as a happy, caring environment. But as in the Queensland homes, the abuse there wasn't only physical. Kevin Marshall remembers a parade of men and older boys preying on the younger children.

KEVIN MARSHALL: When I was younger, some of the people that'd come in would either try to target you or get you into a room between the two dormitories or in the laundry. Some older boys grew up with that environment so they thought preying on younger boys was normal.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: What did they do to you?

KEVIN MARSHALL: Um...tried to sodomise me. Tried to make me perform oral sex on them, fondle my genitals, have me fondle their genitals. There were also places where, if you were out of the home - a camp or somewhere - people there would try doing things.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: The most serious allegations are that the home's senior officer in 1974, Captain Wilson, was himself responsible for sexual abuse. Four Corners has spoken to one of Wilson's alleged victims who wants to move on with his life, but allowed us to talk to his psychologist - a man who, in his early career, had extensive experience with kids needing care from the state.

MARK BLOWS, PSYCHOLOGIST: When the children were sent to a Salvation Army home, we used to say, "Thank God for the Salvos," because we thought they were going to be treated better than in the state homes. I was wrong. This story really shocked me. Very soon after he went to that place at a young and tender age, under the age of eight, he was actually put across a desk... He described the desk to me, the grains of the desk. And an attempt was made to penetrate him - to

rape him. Before that, he'd received a caning, and then he was succoured and...as if comforted...then placed across the desk. And that sort of thing happened a number of times, and it always happened in that very sadistic context.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Who raped him?

MARK BLOWS: The...man who was in charge of the Salvation Army home.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Captain Wilson?

MARK BLOWS: Yes.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: That was his story?

MARK BLOWS: That Captain Lawrence Wilson, yes.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Do you believe him?

MARK BLOWS: Yes, yes, I believed him. We spent three years together checking and rechecking and going through this, and unravelling the effects of these experiences.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: The man who made these allegations would eventually be paid a substantial sum by the Salvation Army as part of a secret settlement. More than 20 years after these events, Captain Wilson was arrested and charged with a number of sexual offences relating to his time at Bexley. In an interview with detectives, Wilson described himself as a 'disciplinarian', but vehemently denied any sexual assaults. At his trial, the men who complained about Wilson were cross-examined, with the suggestion they were colluding in their stories.

What did it feel like to be told you were making it up, or not remembering it properly or lying?

KEVIN MARSHALL: Oh... (Sighs) ..rather comical, really. You know, it's par for the course. It's what you were told as a kid - "You must be lying. This doesn't happen. These are good people."

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Is it all true?

KEVIN MARSHALL: It is all true. It is all true.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: While the criminal case took its course, lawyers representing three old Bexley boys prepared to sue Wilson and the Salvation Army for damages in the civil courts. The Salvation Army's lawyers had already negotiated a secret deal with the witness who had told his story to psychologist Mark Blows - paying him a substantial sum. After the payment was made, Wilson was acquitted by the jury in his criminal trial, and walked free.

MAN IN SHADOW: I believed in the...the justice system that unless a person is 100% guilty or found guilty, then they're innocent until proven, only for the fact that as kids, we were guilty until proven innocent. And I'm still disappointed in the verdict, but that was the...the jury's decision and I just got on with life.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Now, the men we've interviewed from Bexley say they were beaten and bashed by officers in the home. Do you accept that this did take place?

JOHN DALZIEL: Yes, we do.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Some of the men say they were sexually abused by older boys, by volunteers and even by the captain who was in charge. Do you accept that this abuse took place?

JOHN DALZIEL: We accept that it's very likely it did, but we have no proof that it did.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: When Captain Wilson came to trial, what was the Salvation Army's attitude?

JOHN DALZIEL: That, uh...we would not support him in any way, and that if victims needed support, we would help them.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Did you expect Captain Wilson to be acquitted?

JOHN DALZIEL: No, we didn't.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: What was your reaction when he was?

JOHN DALZIEL: Um...we were surprised.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Dealing with these matters in court a quarter-century later highlighted the difficulty former home boys and girls face in bringing alleged abusers to justice.

LENEEN FORDE: The trouble is the people that were abused have a hard time in court. They're not really first-class witnesses in most cases and, er...and the juries have a doubt as to whether they should really convict the person, and that's very unfortunate.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Following Wilson's acquittal, the Salvation Army's lawyers strongly resisted the civil claims of the three Bexley men who had not yet been compensated, arguing that the statute of limitations would prevent them from pursuing the action for damages.

JOHN DALZIEL: That's the first time I've heard that, and they should not have said it, because, as I've previously stated, we have no statute of limitations applying to victims of the Salvation Army.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Well, your lawyers have quoted the statute of limitations in defence of the Salvation Army's position.

JOHN DALZIEL: Well, the Salvation Army makes it clear that we will never close the book on anyone that has gone through our care as long as they live, and I believe we've demonstrated that with the people that we've been helping.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Seeing the statute of limitations as a major obstacle, the three men agreed to settle the case.

How much did they pay you?

MAN IN SHADOW: They paid me \$85,000.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: The practice of secret payments to former inmates wasn't new to the Salvation Army. In 1966, Kerry Gormley was in care in a cottage in a Salvation Army home in Western Australia. One of the cottage parents was Alan Smith. Kerry Gormley remembers one morning in particular.

KERRY GORMLEY: He came early in the morning to wake me up and he said, "Well, look, you don't have to get up just yet. You can get up later." And he sat on the bed and he was patting my hand, and, um, his erection was actually showing out of his pyjamas, and he was trying to get my hand to...touch him, and, at that time, I...I didn't want that. I fought back. Um, you know, there was times when he used to come back in the evenings and...and literally sodomise me.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: 30 years later, Alan Smith, lying low in Tasmania, was arrested and flown back to Perth to face the courts. The Salvation Army had already dismissed him back in 1974 after he confessed to abusing three young men. Astonishingly, they had then rehired him in 1979.

How on earth can you justify that?

JOHN DALZIEL: Now...I can't. Though you must understand that the Salvation Army believes in, um, rehabilitation...for all people, so the way in which it would have been justified by the Salvation Army leaders at that time is that - one, he has confessed and admitted all his faults, he has stated he will never commit them again, and the Salvation Army will make sure that he's never, ever employed in any way near children or even in the same State in which the events took place. Now, I'm not justifying it. It shouldn't have been done and was wrong, but that is the way in which it was justified at the time.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Because he pleaded guilty, Smith was sentenced without the need for a trial. As in New South Wales, several financial settlements were negotiated and the victims were asked to sign confidentiality agreements.

Why do you think they did that?

KERRY GORMLEY: To stop us from talking - like I am now to you.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Are you trying to muzzle the victims?

JOHN DALZIEL: No, we're not trying to muzzle the victims. We are doing it for their own benefit. It is not always a good thing to make public a private thing like that. Now, in some cases it does benefit them and psychologists will recommend that people do it, but as I understand it, it is only rarely that it is a good thing. Um...the financial amount varies according to the client concerned, but dollars speak, and we don't want that to be the criteria. We want the person to be seeking healing.

(QUENTIN McDERMOTT AND KEVIN MARSHALL WALK TOWARDS THE GATE AT BEXLEY)

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Kevin, you must have very mixed emotions indeed coming back here.

KEVIN MARSHALL: Very strong emotions, very stressful. As a matter of fact, I've jumped out of aeroplanes at night-time, and that's less stressful than coming back here today.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: What about leaving?

KEVIN MARSHALL: That feels good. Walking back from here and getting towards the gate, I can feel the tension leaving my body - heavy pressure off my chest and shoulders.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: The damage done in these homes lives on.

KEVIN MARSHALL: A particularly harrowing case, just recently, when, unfortunately, my wife and I lost our little boy. He died, and when we had the ceremony, the thing that went through my head was, apart from looking after my wife, was that there are people who will laugh at me or hurt me because I'm at a very low point in my life now. And that's what I felt. Now sitting here, thinking about it dispassionately, I can say, "That's ridiculous. That won't happen." But at the time, the emotions going through my body, I reverted back to being younger. And I think, surely, being told, you know, "Look, shut up. Your mother's dead. So what?" has something to do with that.

SECOND MAN IN SHADOW: It affects me sleeping, affects my work. I always take jobs where I'm on my own, not with other people. I've lost a lot of jobs because of my aggression, because of all this. And...you have nightmares from it, but you live with it every day.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: There's another, even darker, consequence of abuse. This man says he started being abused by older boys at Bexley when he was nine, and that, later on, Captain Wilson abused him, under the guise of giving him a medical examination. Eventually he himself started abusing the younger boys.

MAN IN SHADOW: I remember I started enjoying some of the stuff that was happening to me when I was 13. So my mind locked in on 13-year-olds and I couldn't get out of that...that thought.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Did that ever change?

MAN IN SHADOW: No.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: It hasn't changed to this day?

MAN IN SHADOW: To be truthful, I cannot look at a 13- or 14-year-old and not think, "I wouldn't mind that."

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: When he left Bexley, he continued his association with the Salvation Army.

MAN IN SHADOW: I ran away to Adelaide and, not knowing where to turn, I turned to the Salvation Army, because that was all I knew.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: In 1994, he was arrested for sexually assaulting several young adolescents and sent to jail for four and a half years, where he underwent a sexual offenders' therapy program.

MAN IN SHADOW: I have to stay away from what's called my danger points.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: What are your danger points?

MAN IN SHADOW: Being anywhere around 13-year-olds and 14-year-olds.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Do you recognise now that what you did was wrong?

MAN IN SHADOW: Oh, shit, yes!

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Are you sorry you did it?

MAN IN SHADOW: Yes, I am. I wish I could turn back...back time, but you just can't do it.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: This man says he was sexually abused and he then became himself an abuser. Do you, does the Salvation Army, accept some responsibility for that?

JOHN DALZIEL: It certainly accepts the fact that people who are abused become abusers. Whether they become sexual abusers is not something on which we have any resolution at the moment, but we do know that abused people become abusers, yes.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Well, he became an abuser. He became a sexual abuser.

JOHN DALZIEL: Yes.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Do you accept some responsibility for that?

JOHN DALZIEL: Yes, we do.

QUENTIN McDERMOTT: Later this year, a Senate inquiry will start hearing the stories of former state wards from around Australia. The Salvation Army will be just one of the bodies invited to answer for the way they treated children in their care.

How do you feel for these men and women who were abused?

JOHN DALZIEL: I feel that the Salvation Army has betrayed its trust. We have extremely high regard in Australia because of the superb work that's been done by so many, uh...both officers, paid staff, and especially volunteers. And it's been built up over literally millions of incidents over the years, and in these cases that we've just been talking of today, that trust has been betrayed. And to the Australian public now, I apologise.

LENEEN FORDE: Not just the Salvation Army - other church groups too, you know, they...they have to realise that there's a...it's a moral issue for them. I mean, what would Christ have done?

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