

IN THE CORONER'S COURT OF EXPERIMENTAL SHORT FORM LITERATURE
AT THE CHAMBER OF REVISIONARY NARRATIVES AND SURVIVAL TESTIMONIES

Court Reference: 2025 / 001

FINDING INTO DEATH WITH INQUEST

Form 37 Rule 60(1)

Section 67 of the Coroners Act (Creative Revisionary Jurisdiction)

Inquest into the Death of:	INNOCENCE
Delivered On:	1 st October 2025
Delivered At:	Coroner's Court of Experimental Short Form Literature
Hearing Dates:	22 nd August 2025, 1 st September, 1 st October 2025
Findings of	Jennifer Bigelow, Deputy State Coroner
Representation:	Mr. Alan Egan
Counsel Assisting the Coroner:	Ms. Lydia Plath

I, JENNIFER BIGELOW, Deputy State Coroner, having investigated the death of INNOCENCE in relation to The Girl Who Loved the Quiet Company of Horses [to be known as Witness GWLQCH] find that the identity of the Witness has been established as the girl who sought safety among horses [GWLQCH], and that the record reflects the circumstances of this death.

AND having held an inquest into this death on the abovementioned dates find that the identity of the deceased was INNOCENCE
born on 22 August 1957
and the first instigating death occurred on or about 27th May 1963
in the following circumstances:

1. [Preliminary Note: Innocence is considered in two forms. Childhood Innocence denotes unguarded trust and presumption of safety. Adult Innocence refers to a residual capacity for wonder and openness that may persist despite knowledge of harm.]

2. [Definition of terms: Innocence is the birthright of every child. It is whole at birth, carrying trust, safety, wonder, and hope. Its protection is essential, for once depleted it cannot be restored to its original state. The Court recognises Innocence not as privilege but as right, fundamental to the wellbeing of both child and community.]

Scope of Inquest

3. This inquest examines the incremental death of Innocence as GWLQCH passed through crucial developmental stages shaped by predation, betrayal, and fragile safety. Its purpose is to record the circumstances, including familial silence and institutional failure, and to weigh evidence drawn from memory, metaphor, and the steady presence of horses as a stabilising force.

Family Background

4. GWLQCH recounts: My mother, capable and resilient but marked by betrayals. Grief sat at our table and ate from our plates. She believed in doctors the way others believe in gods that never speak. The white coats had helped once, hovering over a bedridden child. I learned to look away from stethoscopes and developed white coat syndrome. My father, self-centred and preoccupied, shifted between control and neglect. Childhood unfolded in blue cobblestone lanes with a battered red scooter, the aroma of cakes from the Swiss bakery next door, headless chooks on the chopping block in the greengrocer's yard, crates of soft drink rattling behind the milk bar,
and
predators
everywhere.

Circumstances of Death

5. Innocence was known to possess these elements: *Wonder, Curiosity, Trust, Play, Protection, Safety, Duty of Care*. GWLQCH was described by Witnesses as friendly, adventurous, and affectionate, showing the same demeanour toward all. Innocence embodied in GWLQCH was five years of age when the first fatal breach occurred. The breach was: Indecent Act with a Child Under 16 (Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) s 49Q). Following the initial insult, from ages five to sixteen, Innocence incrementally died through a series of predation, grooming and assaults by adult males. These criminal acts violated GWLQCH's Innocence, trust and safety and severely compromised her development and life choices.

6. The record before the Court demonstrates the death of Innocence in stages, each leaving a wound that altered trust, safety, and the capacity for unguarded presence. The descent is marked and entered into evidence through the exhibits that follow:
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Exhibits

7. Exhibit A: Doctor (KA)

Item: Statement GWLQCH

Five years old, sick in bed. He came up the stairs, an enormous man towering over me. Breathing heavily, his words wet with spittle fell across my face. What should have been care became trespass. My parents were busy in their shop; their duty of care breached. My Innocence was taken under the guise of treatment.

8. Exhibit B: Loiterer (DP)

Item: Statement GWLQCH

Seven years old, playing at the rear of St Kilda police station. A man approached, offering lollies and a firm grip. He grabbed but I escaped. It left fear embedded like fingerprints. My sense of safety was altered and trust diminished. My body filed a report that day and never closed the case.

9. Exhibit C: Window Dresser (JS)

Item: Statement GWLQCH

Twelve years old when he hunted me as prey. He left the shopfront and followed, cutting off my escape with practiced steps. His words lewd, his presence too close. I just made it to the outside dunny, slamming the door. I learned to run and hide, but I could not outrun the danger to Innocence.

10. Exhibit D: Brother-in-Law (DD)

Item: Statement GWLQCH

Thirteen years old, sleeping in a tent beside my sister and the children. It was the middle of the night when his hand pinned me. I froze while family slept. He crossed the boundary of blood and trust. The room was devoid of Innocence. It was a Criminal Act (Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) s 49Q).

11. Exhibit E: Jeweller (JM)

Item: Statement GWLQCH

Fourteen years old. JM was married with a young child. They ran the riding school. On the hard, nail-ridden bathroom floor he annihilated my Innocence. She forced me to work in the hot summer sun pulling dried rusty dock from the paddocks. My gentle, sweet-eyed horse, Blossom, was comfort and safety.

12. Exhibit F: Boss (JH)

Item: Statement GWLQCH

Sixteen, working in a jewellery shop. My boss JH, older, married, his tenderness in the wrong pocket. A psychiatrist's letter permitted the termination. A white austere building: the lift mirrors did not blink. The procedure was fast, painful, strange. I dressed as if my clothes were foreign objects. He drove me back to work. Slouched in the room under the stairs, trying to steady myself, I willed each breath to appear ordinary.

13. Exhibit G: Annexure of Signifiers

Items tabled for Inquest

- a) {Prediction} What women carry in their pockets walking home at night. A weight disguised as ordinary.
 - b) {Archive} The drawer in which a family places truths that do not match the furniture. The handle rarely touched.
 - c) {Safety} A horse walking calmly beside you with slack reins. A breath that arrives on time.
 - d) {Invisible tattoo} The imprint you wear before you can spell your name out loud. The mark no mirror shows.
 - e) {Childhood} A scab you keep picking, healing and reopening. A skipping rope slapping on bitumen, a story that refuses to close.
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Lexicon of lived evidence tabled for Inquest

14. Lexicon of Lived Evidence

Slide Show Link: <https://www.ajantajudd.com.au/writing>

Victim Impact Statement

15. *Item: Statement GWLQCH*

I once was Innocent. It was my birthright. Innocence was robbed from me by failures in duty of care, predatory behaviour, and criminal acts. I have long mourned the death of my Innocence. My life was irrevocably altered and I seek justice through this court. There are marks that do not fade. The predators altered the map of my body and the climate of my mind. Horses saved me. Breath, resilience and speaking out returned me to myself. Let the record show: I survived. Let it show that survival is not the same as justice.

Verdict of the Living

16. The goal is not to erase wrong lines but to know which to read. To rest a hand on a flank, borrow a steady heartbeat, and carry one's weather without making storms. GWLQCH returned to the paddock. Blossom, ears pricked, came unhurried. I stroked her neck; the world aligned. Rope slack, breath steady, the horse answered and my body listened. The past does not heal because we write it. It becomes a neighbour we nod to, sometimes visit, before returning home to the quiet company of horses.

Findings

17. I find that [childhood] Innocence is deceased, having met death incrementally starting on 27th May 1963 with this date being recorded as the official date of death.
18. I find that predatory behaviours and actions were inflicted on the Witness GWLQCH, of which most were criminal acts punishable by law (Victorian Government 1958) and that none were ever dealt with in a court of law.
19. I find that the list of predators below were responsible for the death of Innocence:

FINDINGS: Table of Known Predators with Offence	
Predator 1: Doctor (KA). [Deceased]	Conduct turned illness into opportunity.
Predator 2: Loiterer (DP). [Deceased]	Conduct turned curiosity into terror.
Predator 3: Window dresser (JS). [Deceased]	Conduct turned responsibility into lechery.
Predator 4: Brother-in-law (DD).	Conduct turned family into perpetration.
Predator 5: Married jeweller (JM). [Deceased]	Conduct turned duty of care into violation.
Predator 6: Colleague (JH).	Conduct turned support into exploitation.



20. I find that it is reasonable to attribute the death of Innocence to the assaults perpetrated on the Witness GWLQCH by these predators in a series of events and occasions between the ages of five and sixteen.
21. I find that the primary care givers of Witness GWLQCH were negligent in that they did not exercise sufficient duty of care.
22. I find that legal Justice was not served pursuant to the death of GWLQCH's Innocence.
23. I find the evidence provided by Witness GWLQCH in her description of the loiterer and would be abductor behind St. Kilda Police Station to be conceivable. I find that it was most likely that (DP) is the same perpetrator who abducted 8yo Linda Jane Stilwell from St. Kilda 10th August 1968 and caused her death of which her body remains missing.¹

Recommendations

24. Mandatory screening for all adults with child access. No family or professional exceptions.
25. Teach primary caregivers their responsibility toward duty of care, and mandatory reporting.
26. Teach children to recognise predatory patterns before grooming establishes footholds.
27. Create reporting systems that bypass dismissive adult gatekeepers.
28. Implement trauma-informed protocols with enforcement monitoring.
29. Address systemic enablers: institutional protection, cultural silence.
30. Let silence no longer be mistaken for safety.

I direct that a copy of this finding be provided to the following:

Witness GWLQCH

Det. Snr Sgt Thomas Morphing

Signature:

Jennifer Bigelow

JENNIFER BIGELOW

Deputy State Coroner

Date: 1st October 2025



¹ Linda Stilwell - Deputy State Coroner Iain West (Victoria), *Inquest into the disappearance of Linda Jane Stilwell* (finding, October 2014): "I find that Derek Percy caused the death of Linda Jane Stilwell" (the finding being based primarily on circumstantial evidence).