



TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH DZ, GRANDMOTHER OF CHILDREN IN CARE

DZ “I guess – well, I’ll start 10 years, because for 10 years I’ve been trying to get the department to stop my daughter from emotionally abusing the children, like, in care, plus they’ve been with carers that have abused them.

There’s paperwork to say that has happened. I guess that’s my main aim is to get the children cared for and not neglected.

We have just been able to get access after six years. We got one access this year, where we noticed it was very obvious that two of the children have hearing problems, and – well, I knew one did because he had it when he left me as a three year old and he had a hearing aid.

And the Department never, ever took him to get his surgical grommets fitted and he now is on ADHD medicine, and I think he is totally disruptive because his hearing is affected.

He had quite – he’s not as deaf, as such. It’s behind. It’s, like, water, fluid, and he had to have grommets in. And he’s been kicked out of all his classes. He’s been stopped from playing sport.

DZ He just doesn’t have any quality of life. His brother that’s been in our care for quite a few years – we had his brother for five-odd years – he had similar behaviour but he didn’t have any hearing problems, but he was able to go bush with my husband and work and go to school for five years.

He passed year 12, you know, and he was a credit to him and us. And we were hoping for the same for this little boy but they won’t have a bar of us as far as doing that with him, because if he’s not doing school work at school, what’s – what life has he got?

And they showed us his report, he was getting Es, so – like, he said, “I can’t play sport because I’m being kicked out”, and he’s been kicked out of most of his classes.

Then, [name] she’s just turned 10 four days ago, she has got a speech impediment and also had a lot of ear infections as a little girl.



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DZ She's getting Es at school, but she's a very quiet little girl. I've asked many a times to get the hearing checked.

I – with the little fellow, I sent all his hearing papers because when he was living with me when he got his hearing aid, it was just like total difference in his life, you know. "Oh, Nanny, I can hear you", and then straight away he'd be watching TV, sit there. Like before he'd be jumping off the top of the couch and just not interested. And even the preschool said what a difference it's made to this kid's life, you know.

Their mum continuously comes back into their life, traumatising them. I've now been told yesterday that they're trying to organise to see these kids. She walked out of their lives. They keep traumatising them with the mother. They've been through extreme traumatisation from the mother and/or domestic violence.

DZ She was self-harming in care. She has tried to take her life more than twice in care. She's been in a mental health unit. She's self-harmed.

I don't feel that we can see the kids with her seeing the kids as it traumatises them. I don't want to traumatise them. I want to see the kids happy and if it means we have to give up our visits.

And DCF tell me yesterday I'm being uncooperative because they want to lock me in to one day a month – a date a month. My husband works, it's pretty hard to lock in a day. I work. They've arranged for us to have weekend visits with some of them, but when you travel 1600 kilometres return trip for a two hour visit. They're paying, fair enough, but, you know, that's an awful lot to ask.

DZ And I've said with the psychological assessment if we pass, could we have a foster care assessment and be able to have the children in school holidays for certain days, and I thought that was a reasonable request. These kids are – they could've had a happy life with us.

The one that's got the four, the two older girls were with her. They both left her care because of abuse.

Then they went to a respite carer, the same respite carer, and she had a camera in their room and we reported it. And it was – what we were told it was a baby monitor camera but the kids were terrified, they couldn't undress in their rooms.



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DZ And both of them over different periods of time rang me – or, actually, one Facebooked my grandson and said, “Can you ask nan to come and get me”.

Like, they’re in care and they’re old enough probably to make their own decisions, which the two older ones were when they come to live with us for a time.

I rang welfare for both of them and said, “Look, they’re going to walk out and start hitchhiking to us if you don’t do something”.

They said, “Oh, it’s the weekend. Can you talk them into staying for the weekend and we’ll do something on Monday”, and I said, “They’re not going to do it”, because knowing the oldest one, she would’ve just gone out on the road and started hitchhiking.

DZ So on Saturday morning we went up – I went up and picked her up. There was no problems there. I think she was about 14 at the time. I had her for several weeks. Well, I got into all sorts of trouble over that.

I had a lawyer and he said I had to take her to the government centre by 12 o’clock on a certain day, otherwise I’d have a criminal record. Well, we got to the government centre and she wouldn’t get out of the car. She was with her brother in the car.

The police were called. They just traumatised her really badly, and her mother turned up that day and asked them to let them – let her stay with me. Well, she was 14 by that time as well, so she eventually came back home with me to stay with me.

She was with a carer in Darwin that was giving her dope and alcohol, and she actually got to the stage where she didn’t want to be part of it because all her stuff has been stolen as well in that house.

DZ When she got the children she had six of them to start with. But, I mean, they ought to have put us back together. They should have been putting us back together, helping us. The two younger ones that are in now with a different carer, they had a wonderful carer here.

I don’t talk to them but they’re happy. You can see they’re happy and their carer here, she met the lady in Darwin, she said, “She’s a lovely lady.” So I’m happy with that and they look happy, you know, whereas the other ones are not happy.



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DZ You know, it just breaks your heart. I'm not allowed to cry.

So, yeah. It was just - - Yeah, they've – there's never been any case plans from in care here with me. I mean, when I got really down and out, "If you don't come and do this, I have to give these kids up." And they would turn up, you know, and then write a letter saying I'm – I'm an issue, you know. I want respite care.

My mum died. So I asked them could I take the children with me for the funeral. No. They've got to go to the school. They've got to go the school.

And I said, "Can [name] look after them?" She's the lady that had had them on respite care. "No, she's not a carer." Oh shit. You know, what am I going to do?

DZ So I didn't go to my mum's funeral.