



TRANSCRIPT OF SUBMISSION

JAMES WILLIAMS – 29 FEBURARY 2024

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JAMES WILLIAMS: Okay. My name is James Williams. I'm Wakka Wakka and Woolly Woolly from south east so-called Queensland, but I call it the call it Murray land because it's actually where all the Murray's are from in this country. So my country borders up against the traditional owners of Meanjin, which was named by the colonisers as Brisbane. Been in Naarm for 20 years. And my story, I think the best place for it to begin is in 2010. Early 2010, I went to the local Aboriginal Health Service, actually over at Maribyrnong when it was there. It's no longer there because I wasn't well and they told me I had a really low white blood cell count. So they basically immediately told me to go straight to Footscray Hospital. So I did, and I was diagnosed with cancer with bowel cancer actually in 2010. So, you know, that's when everything sort of started. Had to have pretty scary major surgery and Sigmoid colon. I remember the name of it was removed, and then I had to start the chemotherapy and all that sort of stuff. I was pretty lucky because we caught it early. It's a large percent of men who have that cancer who pretty much die from it. So I'm lucky to be alive.

It continued until through all of the 2010, and basically I was cleared by the end of 2000 or early 2011. But then in 2012, I wasn't feeling well again. And like and I thought it might have returned and I actually went well, I had this relationship with the cancer centre then, so I was being regularly checked and they picked up straight away that it had it was secondary cancer that had moved basically to my liver. And so at the end of October 2012, I think it was almost half of my liver was removed. And then in 2013, about February, March, I think it was most of the other side of my liver was removed. And that's how they do it, because your liver is the only organ that regenerates itself. So it's able to rebuild itself. And that's what happened. But, you know, more chemotherapy. And I had had to have two major operations throughout the whole cancer journey. I had four major life threatening operations and just heaps of chemotherapy. And that stuff really knocks you around. It makes you know, you feel like you're barely living and you feel really weak. You lose all your self-confidence and it gives you panic attacks and all sorts of crazy stuff. But I, you know, I knew it had to happen and for me to be able to stay alive. So, like, I was pretty ill after that was finished at the end of 2013. And I don't think I really felt like I was back to being a normal human being until about 2015, 2016. So my self-confidence was shot and I was barely able to work properly. And it really I really suffered financially for it as well. Yeah. Very badly. So I was feeling and all during that time, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I wasn't really allowed to do anything. And it was I really feel it was because [REDACTED] felt that I was weak and it was a great opportunity to take advantage of me. So [REDACTED] had trouble probably starting, you know, end of 2012, 2013 where [REDACTED] abusing me. And I felt it very difficult to deal with because I was under a lot of stress at the time due to the cancer treatment. So, you know, [REDACTED] continue arguing in 2014/2013 [REDACTED] had an argument and I actually called the police because I just wanted to get away. So they came and [REDACTED]. So

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] And they were really actually good about it, and it actually helped.

5 So then, you know, I think it was for a week and then I came back and everything was okay again. But then it just continued 2014, I think it was early 2014, first six months, the same thing was going on. And I wanted to leave to get away from the situation because [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]

10 [REDACTED] And I thought best rather than, you know, than me sort of engaging in that behaviour was to leave. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

20 [REDACTED] And I've, of course, you know, complained and said what's this all about?
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] don't feel well because I

25 didn't feel well because [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] and they called an ambulance. I was lying in the back of an

ambulance. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

30 [REDACTED] And I think this is the problem, you know, being an Aboriginal man you know, the way the police racially profile Aboriginal men, it's quite common for them to do that. And that's exactly what happened. And they chose to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] And so I spent the next two years [REDACTED] And like, as I said earlier I was still pretty sick, had no self-confidence.

35 I think that's part of the problem too. When I call the police, and [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], I really didn't have much self-confidence, and I couldn't I didn't

defend myself properly. I know that's a fact now. I didn't defend myself because I

40 was really sick and, you know, pretty much had one foot in the grave. I was still trying to recover from all these operations in the chemotherapy and radiotherapy as well. So they chose to do this and I had to, you know, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

45 [REDACTED] Through the entire period, for two years, I'd been fighting [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]ts to make sure I really couldn't understand why.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] But that was it. It was basically [REDACTED]

men who are being targeted. It's quite obvious that's what's happening right across this country. There's 3% of the Australian population, 27% of the prison population, and just about every Aboriginal child in the Northern Territory is like a prison. Population of the Northern Territory is almost 100% of children's prisons. It's a
5 scourge in our society. And when I tell, I tell my white friends about this, they find it astounding. I was even telling an Italian friend at work yesterday who kind of, you know, a bit dark skinned too, but he said, I've never faced that. I said, it's the way you look, mate. You look like me. All they want to do is lock you up. It's enough.

10 **SHAYNE MORRALL:** You okay?

JAMES WILLIAMS: Yeah. I'm okay. Just every time I leave that relive that story, it just gets to you. It gets to me because it was completely unnecessary. And I called them for help. And they abuse me. I mean, you know, a lot of black fellas will say to
15 you, like, you know, I'm not going to call the cops. Why would I know? I'm just going to get in trouble if I call the cops. But I think it's because of my, you know, who I am, and that I'm a real community minded person. And I've grown up in a society where I believe that we need to have some sort of traditional Aboriginal society. We had law enforcement-

20 **SHAYNE MORRALL:** Yeah-

JAMES WILLIAMS: That actually worked and it wasn't abused. And I think it was because of the way, you know, I expected them to do the right thing. And even since
25 then I was very clever about the way I've dealt with them since in some of the actually damaged my car and I thought, right, I'm not going to go to the police station and talk to them about it.

JAMES WILLIAMS: So I rang them, and I mean, listen to the way I speak. I sound
30 like, you know, an average white fella, an Australian white fella. So I never they never saw me.

SHAYNE MORRALL: Yeah.

JAMES WILLIAMS: I conducted everything via email and phone. She, the person
35 who damaged my car was convicted and fined in December last year. And the police, via email asked me to get the cost of the tax invoice from the repairer was \$4,000 to repair my car. So I emailed them tax invoice because they thought that I think because they thought they were dealing with a white person-

40 **SHAYNE MORRALL:** Yeah-

JAMES WILLIAMS: They threw the fullest extent of the law at that woman. And
45 it would have cost her \$5,000. And I'm in, you know, she was feeling guilty. She was convicted of a crime and fined \$5,000 because she, you know, middle aged white

woman. And it's because she actually did commit the crime. And I dealt with the our system, our justice system via phone and email so they wouldn't see what I look like-

SHAYNE MORRALL: Yeah-

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JAMES WILLIAMS: And it worked perfectly. If I'd gone to the police station-

SHAYNE MORRALL: You wouldn't have got the results-

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JAMES WILLIAMS: I wouldn't have got the results I got. And I think that's also perfect proof. And but for me, it wasn't about like my car was repaired under insurance. My focus was there's this bad person who is hurting members of, like hurting a member of my community and it was about making sure that she doesn't hurt other members of my community. That's all I cared about. And she will have learned a lesson from that. So she won't be hurting other members of my community where I live ever again. But, I mean, I don't know what else I could do. I wouldn't have got that result if I didn't deal with them the way I did. And it's it simply wasn't about me wanting vengeance. It was nothing to do with that. It was about, I just want to get this bad person out of my community because I care about my community that I live in.

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SHAYNE MORRALL: There's a question I usually like to ask is that if you had the power to change, like your situation, [REDACTED] and your situation, the way the police treated you, how do you think you could change it if you had the power to change it?

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JAMES WILLIAMS: Well, when I thought about it afterwards, I thought, that's all, because these were older cops and they'd never really understood anything about [REDACTED] and why it occurs and how it occurs. So it was quite clear they had no idea it was black and white. [REDACTED]

■

[REDACTED] So of course the Aboriginal [REDACTED] is guilty. They need training to understand, you know, you know, [REDACTED]. They need critical thinking. They need that's a skill the cops don't have. They need to learn the critical thinking about, truly assess the situation. And how is it that I've rung them twice in a year and asked them for help [REDACTED]? And you know, [REDACTED]. I asked them to help because [REDACTED]. I just kept a [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] So I thought the only thing to do was to, and I thought they'd do the right thing. They'd actually say, be smart enough to know. Well, we see the situation. Yeah, we'll I mean that's a tool to calm cool things down. You know, I issue [REDACTED] nurse. That's all I want [REDACTED]. And I've been told by the police [REDACTED]. And I'd be happy to do that because that's all I wanted was [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]. That's what I

couldn't understand. Was it, yeah, so the power and in fact, I know the police academy in Glen Waverley are actually now four years ago they set up a family violence training unit. They built up an entirely new building. And I know about it because I work there [REDACTED]

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SHAYNE MORRALL: Recognise it?

JAMES WILLIAMS: Yeah, recognise it. And that's what I do. And I effectively use my acting skills to like, you know, completely confused them about the situation. And my job is just to do that and see if they can actually work out what's going on. And I've done it about I think, about 20 times in the last couple of years I've been at the police academy in this role, playing to teach the police critical thinking to do with domestic violence, and they've only been doing it for four years. So 20. Yeah. 2020. [REDACTED] So they had no clue. I think they realised they needed to train people better. Maybe it might have been the case of me taking them to every organisation I could think of to have them brought to account for their behaviour and the way they treated me prompted them to think, well, we need to treat our learn our we need to teach our cops to learn how to analyse the situation properly because they clearly couldn't at that stage. I don't know if there were any better now. [REDACTED] but from what I've seen and I really push them to the limits, you know? And like every single time as an actor, I just, I can do whatever I like. I've been I've had two cops walk out in front of the police, the counter at the academy and arrest me immediately. I've had others where I've been standing in the waiting room saying, come on, you know she in here or not? And I've just walked out the front door and got in my car and drove away and. Well, and then I've seen others. I've walked out the front door and I've been halfway down the driveway, and the cops have come out and arrested me in the driveway. So some of them like, and it's like I'm the perpetrator, but it's I'm creating the scenario where they don't know what's going on, who is actually the perpetrator.

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SHAYNE MORRALL: They don't know how to recognise perpetrator and victims.

JAMES WILLIAMS: Yeah, they don't know how to recognise perpetrators or victims and I don't mind paying the perpetrator. The funny thing is I'm not 45 year old white fellow and so they the good thing now I've seen is their education right say first question they ask you is do you identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander? And I say, no, of course, because I'm not Aboriginal. I'm white. But then there's other days when I think, oh, actually, the trainer said to me once I did it by myself another day, the senior sergeant said, hey James, you know, he just gave me a nod and a wink. And they said, do you identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander? And I went, yeah, I do. That's what this is about, isn't it? You fucking racist bastard. You, and like, you can do whatever you like-

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45 **SHAYNE MORRALL:** Yeah-

JAMES WILLIAMS: It's just ad-lib the whole thing. So you can, so then again, I taught him another lesson. I taught him a lesson as well. In fact, I haven't been called out there for a few months, so I must ring my agent. And because I enjoy doing it because I feel like I'm making a difference.

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SHAYNE MORRALL: Yeah. It would.

JAMES WILLIAMS: Yeah, by. And it really comes down to. I couldn't believe the opportunity when my agent rang me and said, oh, look, we've got these role playing things that the police academy. And she told me what was about. And I said, yeah, definitely interested. I can see that as a way that I can change the way that they think in these difficult situations. I know it's a tough job. I work with the cops in my day job now.

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15 **SHAYNE MORRALL:** Yeah.

JAMES WILLIAMS: And so I know it's not an easy job, but that was the biggest problem. The thing that needed to change was their critical thinking in those sort of situations and working out truly what's going on, because they made the biggest screw up [REDACTED]

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SHAYNE MORRALL: It did.

JAMES WILLIAMS: And I didn't deserve it.