



TRANSCRIPT OF SUBMISSION

WILFRED CARTER

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WILFRED CARTER: So do you want my name?

5 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1:** Yeah, just introduce yourself and who your mob is.

WILFRED CARTER: My name is Wilfred Carter. I prefer to be call Willow. I am also a Gunaikurnai nation, also Wotjobaluk. I am originally from Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust. And, yeah, I've just come down to meet with a few of the boys
10 down here and get some information off them and let them know about what's going on back home.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: Mmm.

15 **WILFRED CARTER:** So, I originally grew up in the 60s where we all know that the 60s were times where - the 50s, 60s and 70s were times - dangerous times to be born as Aboriginal people. Anywhere in the country, but down there in East Gippsland it was pretty dangerous because these big black cars used to come down
20 the road there and you would see them, they were so shiny, but they were coming there to take people away. A lot of the kids that I - boys that I grew up with out there are, yeah, they - they got caught. And, you know, there was a saying, are you a state - a state of ward? And a few of us would say no. And they would say, "Give it time, you're gonna be".

25 You, know, we didn't what that meant but that car told us what it was. So we had problems with a lot of those who were running through the scrub. As soon as we seen the car we would head off through the scrub. The cops wouldn't chase us. You know, the only time they really got us was probably on the week - Fridays when all the old fellas would have a few beers and the weekend. And around school time,
30 because that's when the welfare would come in and, you know, just snatch you from the school and snatch you from - from your fathers on the weekend.

They would come in at any time. It was frightening, because growing up on the mission we all thought we were safe. We thought this land was our land and for us to
35 keep forever. So what's in it, you know, stayed in it. Wasn't going to go anywhere else. But as it was, the white fella back then, they had their ways of saying, well, what we are going to teach you is for the best, for you - for the good of you. Nobody prepared us for where we are right now. Nobody prepared me for where I am right now, because what I lost along the way is nobody is replaced - nobody can - there is
40 not a dollar in the world that can bring that back. Nothing.

The worst part about it was I used to sit down and watch my grandfather.

45 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1:** Take your time, mate.

WILFRED CARTER: Yeah. Sorry.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2: No you are right. I am going to get some tissues.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: Carry on. In your time.

5 **WILFRED CARTER:** It's just -

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: I know it is heaps hard to talk about. Especially when you have got to (indistinct) in your mind.

10 **WILFRED CARTER:** Yeah. It's - I didn't realise this was going to happen.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: No, that's okay. Don't - don't be -

15 **WILFRED CARTER:** Yeah, see I'm still caught in between, I guess, the mission ways and white man's ways. The mission ways for me was to sit run and listen to my grandfather, my dad, and all the old fellas sit there and talk. And when I was - when I was a young fella I thought it was just all gibberish, you know, they were all talking gibberish, you know. Thinking about it today, that wasn't gibberish, that was - it was my - my language. My identity. They weren't allowed to sit down and talk to us
20 about it. But the only time they did was when they got - got down drunk but they were all - all the old men would be together and they would sit around drunk.

And you would hear them going from it and you would be thinking what the hell are they on about? And we didn't know that was our language, that was our identity. It
25 was stolen from us. And nobody has ever, ever helped us try to fight to get it back. But getting my language back now is never going to happen in my lifetime, it's not going to happen at all. It's not going to happen at all, because - simply because it wasn't taught to me by the word of mouth, by the men that was supposed to give it to me. The same with my brothers. All us guys that grew up in the mission were - we
30 were all just targets to be taken away to the homes. I mean, a lot of boys ends up in Burwood, Turana. A lot of them even ended up in the jails, like Sale, the old jails and that. And most of these guys that I - I think about them, all these boys, they all died before their time.

35 I'm one of the lucky ones out of - out of nearly 40-odd guys that I run around with in the scrub out there. There is only five of us left now, and all these guys have since died because they were taken away from their parents and their people and they were - and they were all told to go down there and live with these white people and say, "Well, this is your mum and dad now." You have got to call them mum and dad, my
40 uncle and aunt, your brother and sister." What about my people back home? What about my family back home? What about my mum? What about my dad? That never came into play for these people. And the white man thought he was doing everything right. Yeah, well he didn't.

45 See, when we - we had our school out at Lake Tyres where - the state school went up to grade 6. We were taught everything about England, everything about every other country in the world except Australia.

We kept walking in and pledging our allegiance to the Queen, and I couldn't understand that. Were we were pledging our allegiance to a person. It was the same with the church. They were saying you have got to come down to church every Sunday. You have got to sit down and you have got to believe in Christianity, you have got to believe in God and Jesus. I said okay then, why would I want to believe in somebody I don't know, I can't see? Why would I believe in somebody's religion when it's not mine? See, as far as I'm concerned there was no religion in this country 250 years ago. There was only story time and dream time.

10 That's as far as it was - no Christianity. And you look around and - in this - in this country alone and we have got, what, in Victoria alone just over 170 different nationalities. How many religions? Yet these people were allowed to go around, bring their culture here, bring their language here, bring their religion here, bring everything of where they come from here and allowed to go around and do all that and, you know, parade down the street and say, "We are here, this is who we are." If black fellas were to go down, and, like, make a noise, we are only troublemakers. You know. We go down, we scream out land rights, we are called troublemakers. And yet these people can do everything else, we can't.

20 So my mentality is that I don't exist. I officially don't exist. And it is simply because of the first referendum we had. Now, in 1967-68 when the first referendum was passed they recognised us then as citizens - Aboriginal people, human beings in our own country. Right. That was in 1967-68. Anybody on that date born on that day who was, you know, after that date you were recognised as Aboriginal people. You know, citizen in your own country. Well, what about the people before that date, like myself? Where do I fit in with all of this? See, as far as I'm concerned, I'm part of the flora and fauna. I identify myself as any animal I want because really I don't exist simply because of that referendum.

30 Then they had this second referendum, which is a yes and no again. I didn't vote on it. I didn't want to vote on it because I didn't understand it. I don't know what it - who was going to benefit out of it, how - how was I going to benefit out of it. Because I'm still stuck with the first referendum where I haven't been acknowledged yet. I'm still living in that part of the world. And, you know, I walk around here and have a look at all these buildings. Fair enough, this all might be the future and that, but I'm still stuck right there because I haven't been recognised now. We have been given our land back down there, land rights, we have got all that. That's all good, but all us black fellas from that time backwards have never ever been, you know, represented or never even been acknowledged as a human beings.

40 And that's what a lot of people don't understand. That referendum, well that should have been enough but they should have acknowledged all of us. The first referendum should have been enough for everybody. Not have another one now and then split the whole community. I mean, the black fella was already split before the white fella came here. You know, we were all warring tribes back in the day. We were all bluing and that. But when the white man came here the dynamics changed because the black fella realised there was one danger here and that was one white man.

5 He was here to install so much - I don't know - authority which he then did. Now, every state in this country has stories to tell about their so-called white fella who has looked out for them. You know, the past might be the past. People say you should get over it. Okay then, if I was to go down to your backyard, grab all your family out, take them out and bash the shit out of them how would you feel? Would you say - would you say to me that's all right that's in the past now? No, you wouldn't. You would be wanting justice straight away.

10 So, most of my life I was always running. I had to run to school, run home from school. I was always running until I got to an age where I got big enough, I was taught how to fight and no more. I'm not running any more. If you want to stop me, well, we will do it now. But those are the things that I've done. You know, and I'm still stuck with that - with the past. I don't care how far the - how far this future has come, it doesn't mean anything to me how far it's come. It's what I've done to come
15 this far with it. And I haven't really achieved anything because I'm still who I am and I'm not that person who has been identified.

20 And, you know, if white fella wants respect and, you know, want to be treated with respect, okay, I will do that. But you've got to tell me, you know, who I am, where I fit in in my life. There is nobody here that can do that. The only person who can do that was my father, my grandfather and my mum. So that was all stolen. So how do you - how do you fix that stolen part up?

25 Then people say, what do you mean it's stolen? Define stolen for me. Well, when you go around getting black fellas drunk, you are sitting there. Because it's premeditated, okay. You are sitting there waiting for all these mothers and fathers to get drunk, and then you come in to steal the kids straight away. That's stolen. That is kidnapping, that's not stealing people, that's kidnapping. And back in those days we couldn't prove it either way. Oh, no, we are doing it because you're all drunk. So you
30 are always drunk. Okay then, how many missions do you know have a - have a pub within a five mile radius? How many missions?

35 It's either a five or 10 mile radius there is always a pub. The reason the pub was set up there wasn't for all these white men to go working around there, it was set up there so they can destroy the black fella. So we have - I live at Lake Tyers, we have got a pub in Nowa Nowa. Then in Lakes Entrance have got four pubs there. Orbest is another 35 minutes down the road, we have got three pubs there. (Unknown term) we have got a pub there. So all these little towns around us: Pubs. So they were saying no you are not allowed to take grog on to the mission. Okay then. They stopped all
40 that. Did they? No. Because the grog was still getting on there, the white fella was still selling the grog to these black fellas. So the white fellas who said no grog on the mission, he stuffed up big time.

45 He should have just went out there and said no, close the pub down. Now the pub is closed but the general store, the post office now is now selling grog out - out of it. So they put a bottle-o in there.

So the is black fella wasn't going to win any time in any - any time, you know, in those years, because we were so suppressed by the alcohol. You know, the old black fellas they couldn't even do what they were supposed to do, like teach us what we were. Because I used to go hunting with all the old fellas. Right. We would go
5 through the scrub hunting roos down through our teenage years. We used to go down hunting possum all the time, fish. We would do that. It was great. It was really, really great fun. But as the times changed the people changed and the attitudes of the people changed. When they started kicking black fellas off the mission and saying you don't belong here because your skin is a little lighter than the others, well, that
10 was - that was separating people there and then.

Segregating black fella from black fella. That shouldn't have happened. We should have just threw all the white fellas off the - but that wasn't going to happen. Now, like I am, I'm still stuck with where I am in the past. I will - I will listen to all the
15 stories that they say, yeah, well, you know, this is how it is now and this is the way you should be thinking now. No. Don't tell me how I - I can think. Unless you have been through what I've been through, and seen what I have seen, and experienced what I've seen, don't tell me any different. If anything, just come with me for the ride. You will find that what - you will find that we have certain things in common,
20 you know.

In my - from eight years old until I turned 16 I went through three State schools and five different secondary schools until I turned 16. I was just bounced back and forwards from Lake Tyres to my family down here, then they didn't want me,
25 because everywhere I went I was fighting. I was just fighting. I didn't give a shit who it was. I didn't care what house I was in, I was fighting. And the people will be saying why are you fighting all the time? Nobody sat down and ask me. Nobody asked me about whether I liked to be here with them. Nobody asked me how was my trip coming down here. Why are you here? Because my mum died when I was eight
30 and dad died not long after, I grew up without any rules.

I grew up without my mother and father. Because the moment my mother died they separated us straight away and I just watched [REDACTED] go on a spiral, shit shoot downhill real quick. And [REDACTED] turned into an alcoholic. And I kept
35 growling at [REDACTED] all the time, why drink? Why drink? Why drink? Well, yeah, [REDACTED] had it really rough. Really, really rough. And that's what a lot of guys around my age, and a lot of our sons and that don't realise, like - like I have - I have had a quadruple bypass 10 years ago, I played footy. I have done everything. But I still can't kick this feeling. I don't want to because it's built me into the person I am right now.
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You know, it adds a character to me. And it's part of my - my educational growing up because I know the wrongs that were done and there's nobody in this country can say to me those wrongs weren't done to you. Of course they were. It mightn't have been done to me, but it was done to somebody who is a part of me, part of my
45 family. And that meant every black fella on that mission out there they were a part of me and I was a part of them.

And when they started picking out which one who was too light to stay there, who was the troublemakers, they shanghaied out in the towns like Lake Entrance, Bairnsdale and that, and some of the problems started there where all these other fellas would say, "No man, we got kicked off. Why should we respect you black
5 fellas when you haven't done anything to help us." Well, when you have got - when you are on a mission that's run by white fellas, you know, who do you look up to? Do you look up to the white fella or you look up to the church, the priests and all that? Or do you look up to your own people who is - who you think has failed? They didn't fail, they just didn't have the power to do it.

10 They did have the power, but at the end of the day the white man was going to say no. You know. I don't care what - what all you black fellas say right now. I don't really care. It sounds like a good idea but I'm the one who says no. The ration side of things, I mean that was ridiculous. Yeah. You know, rations. We used to line up at
15 the shop out there and get all that stuff. But if they had just kept that away from us we would have been quite content to scour in the bush hunting all the time, because it was great fun.

It was part of our life, you know. I should have been taught how to my - my father's
20 tongue, my grandfather's tongue, my mother's - and their tongue. I should have been - that was my right. So why was it stolen from there? Now, who is going to put their hand up and say, well I stole it but it was for your good. Who is going to tell me that? Then they are going to say to me, well your language is here in the museum, in the archives. No, it ain't. My language is already gone. It died with my grandfather, my
25 father. So I don't care -

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2: It is that passing down. It is oral, passing down.

WILFRED CARTER: It is meant to be passed down by tongue, not by writing on a
30 piece of paper. We didn't have pens and pieces of paper and chalk boards and that when the white man came here. We had drawings in the sand. You know, that's how things happened. But, we are so assimilated in Victoria, you know, we are - we are a joke to the rest of Australia. Like South Australia, New South Wales. And, I mean, these States Can still speak their tongue. I mean, I go to missions and that, I can still
35 hear them speaking and I think man, I wish I was here, I wish I was living here. But then why wasn't it taught to me back home? Why was I supposed to learn about the Queen, England, Germany, all those places. Why was I supposed to learn about all that? I'm not going to go and visit them.

40 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1:** Mmm.

WILFRED CARTER: There is no way I can go over there.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: If it's not a rude question, like what year were you born
45 in?

WILFRED CARTER: Sorry?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: What year were you born in? I was born in 1961.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: Yeah, I thought it might have been because I'm '61 as well. And I'm just trying to put my mind into where -

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WILFRED CARTER: Where I am.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: - where you are, because as you know my family is from Tyers.

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WILFRED CARTER: Yep.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: But I never knew anything about it.

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WILFRED CARTER: But you have also got Wotjobaluk, [REDACTED] too.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: Yeah, we are Wotjobaluk as well. But I never knew anything about it, and I'm just putting into your world what you are talking about, at my same age and what I was going through and what you were going through, it's -

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WILFRED CARTER: A lot of us - my story differs to [REDACTED]. So [REDACTED] well his world just went the moment mum died. Dad was always fighting with him all the time because dad was, you know, he had all the people, he to go fight and march down here for Lake Tyres and he was caught up in the political world. Where everything, bright lights and everything was getting around him. He forgot about all of us because the moment mum died [REDACTED] were taken away. His responsibility was taken. He couldn't even teach us our language. That's what a father is meant to do, sit us down and tell us. The same with our grandfathers. I mean, all those guys that I remember back home there, they all spoke their tongue. But -

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UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2: Did your dad, though? Did he know it?

WILFRED CARTER: Yes.

35

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2: He did. Okay.

WILFRED CARTER: They all spoke - every one of them spoke but they weren't allowed to.

40

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2: Yes.

WILFRED CARTER: Because they had a preacher come around and see us every Sunday, which we always used to race, you know, on a Saturday morning we would get up and swim in the lake just to stay over there, over at the lake at the beach there. We wouldn't come home until 5 o'clock Sunday afternoon. That meant church was over so we would come back.

45

So why would you come, grab all these boys who are going out doing what they are supposed to do, and say, no, come in this little house of God here and sit down and read this little book. And this guy here is going to be your soul saviour and protector. Man, he didn't come in the bush with us and get a tick in - get the tick out of my
5 head. He didn't get chased by a snake and say, no, no. He wasn't there with us running around. I know who was there running around with us. You know. And they were shoving this down our throat. The English, they were shoving it down our throat. I'm so assimilated, I'm so - I feel so white inside. You know. And when people say, well, you know, it's just part of your - I only found out who my mum was
10 - Wotjobaluk and I'm hoping I'm pronouncing that right.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: That's right, yeah.

WILFRED CARTER: You know, because I have run into a few boys up in Ballarat there and I looked at them and said that's my mother's mob, that's my mother's tribe. You know, and they told me how to say it and I keep saying it all the time because I'm really happy with it. I'm really proud of it.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: It interests me, being on a mission with - because as you know we are Wotjobaluk people, Lake Tyers, and Gunditjmara and all over
20 Victoria are probably at Tyers, what languages were - there would have been a mixture of languages.

WILFRED CARTER: There would have been - there would have been maybe
25 eight, nine different dialects.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: Yeah.

WILFRED CARTER: But a lot of them all say that Bundjalung was our - our
30 language. But the Bundjalung comes from northern New South Wales, Queensland, Lismore and all those areas. That language can't stretch this far.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2: No.

WILFRED CARTER: It can't stretch right across to western Australia, it can't. It only stretches around the region where those Bundjalung people are. It doesn't come down here. The only way it comes down this way is if it is brought down by people who have come this way and down here and married in. [REDACTED] married a guy from up at Lismore, Kyogle. Now he spoke a bit of - a bit of language. He spoke
40 enough. But he didn't speak it down home. And I thought to myself, the reason he doesn't do it because is - he doesn't want to insult us. Which was - I thought it was a pretty good move, because when black fellas speak like that, you think who are you? Where do you come from? What are you doing here? You know, what, tongue is that?
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UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2: It's not the tongue for the area.

WILFRED CARTER: Yeah. And we will just say, no, that's not our language. Well, how do we know? We don't know what's our language or not. It's all gone now. It's all buried with the people back home, all the old fellas. And what they have in the archives of history or what they have written down, it was written down by somebody's white hand. It wasn't written down by black fella, because it was meant to be passed to us by tongue. So, how do I deal with that type of stuff?

See, that's my identity. I could go home now and, you know, walk down the street and mates would come to say, how are you going Willo? I just say, man I'm not Willo, don't talk to me. See, because you guys already voted on me once, but you voted on me again. And, you know, having people vote against other is - especially with black fellas, you know, we are not meant to do that to each other. And I thought this - yes and no, it needed to be thrown at the guy who has ever - who has ever bought it up.

Whoever bought it up that person should be taken out and beaten over the head with and say okay, what does it all mean? It - it just went back to - took me back to the days where, you know, my rights are still there in 1968-69. See, like I - I still believe that I haven't been acknowledged yet. I still believe that. And I have been talking to other people about it and I think, man, it makes sense. When you think about it, it makes sense. Everybody asked about 1968-69 referendum. Everybody was acknowledged, but they didn't acknowledge the people before that. Which is meaning us guys.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2: What does recognition look like then? What would that look like? Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: Yeah, what is - define recognition.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2: Yeah.

WILFRED CARTER: Define what that means. What is recognition. Okay. I reckon I was - I'm a bricklayer by trade. I recognise that, I know that because that's what I had done as a trade.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2: Yeah.

WILFRED CARTER: I recognise myself as an Aboriginal man. I know that because I can look in the mirror and I see myself. I know what recognition is to me, but do the people who I am speaking to - do they understand what it means to them or to other people? Because it can be a damning thing or it can be a good thing. So I recognise myself as an Aboriginal man. A very, very good Aboriginal man. I will back that up to too anyway. I don't care. And, you know, because of what I went through -

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2: Yeah.

5 **WILFRED CARTER:** I can say that and tell - this is what I've been through. And until you done what I did then you can understand what recognition is. You have got to be recognised but you have also got to be reconciled with yourself. And how do you do that after you have been through so much trauma? You know, traumatic stuff like having your language - watching you - watching [REDACTED] being taken away, running away from all this. How do you - you know, [REDACTED] were running from the law. And - you know, the reason we were running from them is because they were going to take [REDACTED] away and bring us down here to the big smoke.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2:** Not because you had done anything, it was just the fact they were chasing you.

15 **WILFRED CARTER:** We couldn't work out what have we done wrong? Why are we running? Why do we have to run from in these people. The cops were meant to be there to protect and serve. No, they were coming there and kidnapping people.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: Taking them.

20 **WILFRED CARTER:** No, that's kidnapping. To me that's kidnapping. I don't care what anybody says is, that's kidnapping. And today, I don't know how long the statute of limitation goes for, but, you know, shouldn't those people be brought to justice for the desecration, rape and all the stuff they done? Why - why is it? I know if black fellas has done something, if he has done something 10 years ago, that would come back and haunt him, he would end up go and do time. So, you know, how do we deal with what are we - if we are going to go forward, how far are we going forward? What are we going into? Who is there to protect us? What are the guidelines? What are we meant to do?

30 All I want to do is be recognised who I am. Not so much for what I've done, but for me - for just being a human person in my own country. It's my right. My rights were stolen. Same as your rights. All our rights have been stolen but a lot of us look at it in different ways. You know. Some of them might think oh, for the good of it. But okay then, if you think it's for the good of it that's your world, you live in it. But don't expect me to cross over here and, you know, enjoy the way that you have enjoyed your life because it's not for me, it's not my style. But if you want to - you want to come down to the big city and be with all the people you call mum and dad, white fellas, and you know, you can call them that. You can call them mum and dad if you want. I don't care.

40 You know, but don't expect me to do that because I've lived - I was born into a time when it was so dangerous. All us black fellas born in those times we were born into the most dangerous times on earth in this country. And I don't know how this country can go around and say we are the luckiest on the planet with the - with the secrets they have. You know. They hid - I mean, we have got massacre sites down there where black fellas were killed for the sake of a cow.

45

5 You know. And here we are, we go around the supermarkets, we are eating all this meat and that, but we don't realise that this cow, you know, was a part of why we are assimilated and why most of us are all dead now. Because we had one guy down there named McMillan, Angus McMillan, he was probably the biggest butcher around in that part down there. There are maybe 15 massacre sites around down there. So this guy was a pretty good butcher. But, you know, he got a big name McMillan. He's a Scottish. So what? Who cares about them? Why isn't it we can go back and do this to these people? Because it's called murder then. So what's the difference between that death and if I went back and shot one of his family?

10 What's the difference between that? The difference is, colour here. That's the biggest difference. I will stand to go to jail for 100 years, this guy just walked down the street the next day and have a smoke with his mates. That's the problems that all us black fellas were growing up, a lot of us men were growing up - we have grown up with so much anger in us we didn't know how to - how to focus that anger out to anybody. We have kept it. I have kept a lot of anger. But, you know, all that anger that I have it's turned into - it's turned me into a better person because I've learnt to control myself. But I've learnt to talk to white fellas in a way where they can understand without me being angry and yelling at them to say you are this, you are that. You know, you are the cause for my being. But I have also played a part in my lifestyle about how far I've got.

25 So I take that - that side of the responsibility but I won't take the side where these guys have forced me to do something that I didn't want to do. Because, you know, when you are forced to do something you don't want to do, well, you either do it and not enjoy it, which you do, or you don't do it at all and in which case, you know, you are no good to the old situation that's going to happen. So, you know, I just try to work out which way is up from here on in, you know. But I - I know what I've done. I know where I want to be. But I - I want to be that person when I was a little boy, you know, have - have all that stuff. But, yeah, getting it back is hard. And, you know, no matter where I go, I run into people around my age and that, and they look at me and they say (indistinct) and I think did I say something wrong?

35 Because they walk away from me very quietly. And I think to myself, did I say something wrong? And it's not until later on I say man, you and I lived in the same room, it's just that you were over here and I was over here. And so the fact of growing up without your mum and dad was one of the hardest things that any kid can do. It's the hardest thing in the world to grow up without them. Because have got no stability. When you have got [REDACTED] taken away, then you go back home, you are running around the mission by yourself. Yeah, you look at your aunts and uncle and they are all drunk. You think, what the hell is going on? Why am I here? Why is everybody gone? Why is everybody drunk? So these are all the questions I was asking. Why are they drunk? Why - why do these fellas get taken? Why am I going to get taken? Why? Ask (indistinct) because everybody is here drunk. Right.

Okay then, well, let's do something about this drunkenness. Let's ban the alcohol of -
ban the sales of alcohol in the State of Victorian. You know what would happen, hey.
You would have white fellas running around with - truck loads saying, "You are the
cause, you black bastard, we will shoot you, we will hang you." It was their grog.
5 Who makes all the money out of all this? Hey. Who makes all the money? Black
fella make a pretty good dollar and he goes to the pub there, and that white fella is
there, he is his best mate until that money is gone. I'm your best bro now, I will look
after you, no worries. I will give you smokes and grog. You go out there, tell the rest
of your mob to come in, I will sell you all the grog you want. Keep you happy until
10 the money runs out.

So why aren't those guys responsible for the death and destruction of those people
that they - and the lives they destroyed? Why aren't they standing? Why aren't these
publicans standing up? Why aren't the cops standing up for the slavery that they
15 done. Why isn't the justice system saying hang on a minute, "These - these black
fellas have got a big case here. We should be standing over here and saying well, this
guy is right, it was caused by the white man's poison". It's not going to happen. It's
not going to happen simply because we are all assimilated here, and, you know, most
of us black fellas want to live in the white man's system now because we are caught
20 up to it. But there was a lot of us guys that I come from the bush, man, I enjoy where
I come from because it's safety.

Here you can walk down the street here, within 10 yards you are wondering what this
guy is here and you are wondering what that guy is over in the corner. Is this guy
25 going to come and stab me? Is this guy going to run over me? You can't - you don't
worry about that in the scrub. You don't have those, you know. What you have is
pure sanction out there. And you know that coming to a place where you have
hundreds of thousands of people from it all walks of life here, and you don't even
know which one of them is Australian. How many of them are Australians? Are they
30 real Australians apart from us? Or are we real Australians or what? Who is who?

So we can jump up and - jump - we are descendants of the full bloods. That's fine. It
ain't going to cut it, because the way this country is heading now, all them old white
bastards that came out here 200 years ago, they are just about - they are just about all
35 gone. It is their descendants now that realise the destruction that they have done. And
they can't apologise for what's happened, and even if they did, well I'm not going to
accept their apology because it's not their right to apologise to me for what their
father has done. It should have been sorted out then. It shouldn't have happened.

40 So if we have got a judicial system, then we will go and say I will say I want to go
back because this guy abused and assaulted me back then. What can do you? Oh,
that's just way back then so the, you know, time is up for that. You know, us black
fellas can do that all the time in our lives and it's not to happen. So what happens?
We come down to big buildings like this, big fancy buildings down - and we pour
45 our stories and our heart out and then I think what's going to happen with that? And
the people going to recognise what I said?

Was it real that I said it? Is it the truth or am I lying? Well, you don't know until you tell your own story of your own journey. And this is my journey, this is my story. And there's nobody that can tell me that where I have been and what I've seen didn't happen. I seen it with these two eyes, I know how it happened, and I still have that feeling. And I still - I still recognise myself as part of the flora and fauna.

So I have that right, and if I want to be a tiger snake I will. That's my right. Because if they can run around and have ABC, LGBT, 123 and all that jazz. You know, all this religion, and say you have got to believe in all this, we have got to respect you fellas for the rainbow coloured flags. Okay then, respect this tiger snake. That's all you have to do is respect it. And then say, no you are not a tiger snake; that's right. I'm not. But you are not who you think you are. So don't tell me that I'm not a tiger snake and when you are claiming that you are something, okay, don't tell me that you are - you are this, you are that, you are this. I come from a time where you fellas weren't even thought of.

Like, the only people in those days, and you say the word poofter, was - you know, it was a very bad word. I remember my nan used to say, you can't say that to these fellas here. You know, I knew there were - I knew the difference between these guys but we weren't allowed to say it to them. We will to call them uncle because that's who they were. We knew who they were but we weren't allowed to say things like that to them. Now, they treated us the same way with all the respect that, you know, we treated them. Some of them were just - hey (indistinct) shut up, leave them alone.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: The question I will be interested your answer on it, I will just close the door. You have mentioned growing up on the mission, the loss of language, the loss of culture and that. Do you remember as a kid growing up how you would - how you were able to get that time or did you have to sneak off the mission to practice your culture and your language? Were they always sort of watching over you making sure that you couldn't use it?

WILFRED CARTER: We never had that opportunity.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: Yes.

WILFRED CARTER: We never had that. The only time that we could do that is I was only a little - when we would go hunting out the scrub with all the old fellas, they would take the dogs out. All us boys will be just - probably about 30, 40 people out there with all the mission dogs. But you could hear them off in the distance, they will be yelling out. And, you know, like again it was all gibberish. Dogs barking. And, you know, a lot of the old guys you could see them standing around, they were all talking but, you know, we were all caught up in the hunt. We were too busy caught up in the hunt. And, you know, the old guys were making sure that all us younger guys were protected. The bigger guys were chasing roos towards us. You know. But all the yelling and screaming, and the yelling that was going on from the old fellas, now I realise that that was my language they were yelling around the bush. I was supposed to learn it then.

But, you know, when you are caught up in the hunt and so excited you just don't know. And a lot of that should have went back home when we went back home and sat around the campfire, but the old fellas weren't allowed to do it.

5 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2:** Weren't allowed, yeah.

WILFRED CARTER: They weren't allowed to talk any language whatsoever.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1:** So once you left those boundaries of the mission it just automatically came back and bang.

15 **WILFRED CARTER:** Yeah. But. When the boundary gate went up, that boundary, that was for everything. All our culture, all our language. Everything that was meant to be given to us as Aboriginal people, men, young men growing up, is that wasn't going to happen. We had to first learn the English language. We had to learn the ABCs. That was shoved down our throats. What made it worse is that we had to get chased around to go to church on a Sunday. Now, as you know, black fellas, I don't know how they managed to convince all these black fellas that you know, you are a good Christian and now they believe in the good book and that. But they have got to understand that bible played a major part of the destruction of Aboriginal people and children in this country. It still does it today, that book, because is it - are they real gods? Are they real? I mean, in India they have got about 20,000 different gods. You know, we have got - the culture here, they - people bring over here, they bring all their religion over and they all practice it.

25 But we had one thing shoved down our throat, it was a Bible and the education. And we - we didn't have choices like all these people here have. We didn't have those choices. You are going to take it whether you like it or not. That's the attitude, you know, of the teachers, the preachers and the managers on the day. You either take - and if you are a troublemaker at home, well, you get sent off the mission in the mainstream. And that was part of - that was another part of the problem too, is when you - a lot of the black fellas thought we were just way too wild out of control, us mission black fellas, we were just mad drunken bastards. We were sort of persecuted by our own black fellas in town. And I - in my teenage years we used to, like three or four car loads we used to just go to town just to go shopping. That's the way it was because nobody liked us.

40 Black fella, white fella, any fella. You know, the cops hated us. The reason they hated us because they couldn't catch us. And when they - when we did go into town they couldn't do anything about it because we didn't do anything wrong. But we weren't allowed to be in that town when the sun went down, we will to get home. So all the other black fellas, they had a certain type of privilege, where, you know, mission people we were branded really - we were branded pretty good. And, yeah, I don't mind, I still carry it today. Of course I'm a mission boy, I'm not like any of you fellas uppity blacks in town. You know. I said, look the finest footballers come off
45 the mission too and I'm one of them. So, you know.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: And I have heard stories and, you know, it's part of our history.

5 **WILFRED CARTER:** Yeah, well, you know, I know that a lot of those black fellas spent time training with all the white fellas, but us guys in the bush, man, we were jumping over logs, chasing roos and everything else down there. You have got to dodge things when you are out there in the scrub. So it helped us a lot. But, you know, in those hunting times there was a lot of time where they did sit down and talk, you know. But like I was - a lot of the older guys might have sat down but I
10 didn't, I was still caught up with being - being a little boy going out hunting with dad and the brothers. It was the most exciting thing.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: Fantastic memories. It was great, you know. And I can still see all that today. And - but I didn't pay enough - never mind to know that these
15 guys could speak in the language. If I knew that I would have sat down. But, you know.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2: You weren't to - but you weren't to be aware of what's to come.
20

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: Yeah.

WILFRED CARTER: And I always thought, you know, it was going to come to me. But, yeah, right now I'm just caught up in the fun and everything. I've got to do
25 this, I've got to do in that.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2: Of course. A different role to play, yes.

WILFRED CARTER: But I didn't realise that in the same sense, because we had
30 our school there, we had our own State school there, all the others had to go to Orbost and Bairnsdale high, I didn't realise that the teacher, the welfare mob, the galahs running the place, and the police they had an agenda. I didn't realise about that. And I know what exactly what it is today, about but they turned to us and it was meant to destroy my father, my grandfather. It was meant to destroy them. And that
35 way if we - we take the head of the snake off, the rest is useless.

And that's exactly how it turned out. Turned out we all turn into useless - a lot of us boys were taken away, put, in like Burwood Boys Home, Turana and stuff like that. But that's only half of the story. The other half is worsser, is when they were coming
40 home, they were coming home to people who were - they would just look and say, come home for funerals. A lot of the guys that grew up out there didn't even get a chance to see their mother, been back to see their mother or father. They never even got the chance to, you know, sit around with them. All they remember is your mother was drunk all the time, your father was drunk. They didn't want you, you were no
45 good to them.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: Just drunk.

5 **WILFRED CARTER:** That's what they were told over and over and over. And - because I know that - I had trouble with them fellas telling me stuff like that. I say no, you never come off the mission like I did. You don't know what I've - what I've done. And, like, every school I went to I was fighting. I was fighting anybody and everybody, I didn't care. For the simple reason being is that I was the only black fella there at the school. And when you are the black fella there you are the biggest target on the place of the planet.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1:** I know that feeling.

15 **WILFRED CARTER:** I mean Ferntree Gully Tech School it was all boys. I had to run - as soon as I got off the station at Ferntree Gully I had to run to the school which was about 300 yards away. And when I got there that was okay. It was when the form 6 guys get there, they say, "You made it this time". They said, "Make sure when the bell goes you run back to the train station and don't let us catch you on there". I had to do that every day. Every day. And I came back home and told my [REDACTED] says, "Well, I tell you what you have to do". What's that? [REDACTED] said, "Come on, we will go and play footy on the weekend." So I went and started playing footy. And I didn't play in the juniors, I went straight out and played in the reserves where there was some real old bad arse old men.

25 And [REDACTED] was saying you have got to watch these old guys, you might be faster than them but they are going to hit you real hard. And sure enough, that went on for two games and then I got sent back to Melbourne, and before I left [REDACTED] said, "don't run". And that changed. When I got to the station there, I just started walking, and the bigger form 6 guys come over and they said, "Why aren't you running?" I said, "Because [REDACTED] said I've got to stop". And they said, "Well, [REDACTED] is not here". And I said, "I know, but I'm here". And I had a fight. I got beaten up. I got beaten up pretty bad. But the respect I got off of those guys straight away it was just, you know, it was really good.

30 These guys said, man you are pretty good. I didn't think you would have keep on - keep running all the time. We were wondering when it was going to stop. But because I think they realised that - I think they might have felt sorry for me, I don't know. But I learnt how to fight real quick. I learnt how to fight real quick. And then, 35 yeah, I got good at it, I got better at it. So that was a - that was one of the things I've kept. That part of it was going to save me. Even if I - I have two options. I can run or I can fight. I thought of it and I thought running is the best option. Because unless you have got backup there, there is no good fighting.

40 So unless you have a lot of back-up with you and you know where you are and all that, don't fight. The best thing to do is run. But as young men you get sick of that, you get sick of running. And it's not in your nature to keep on running. So when that stopped it was good. But it also put me into another age group where when you go 45 into these different age groups you find out everybody has got a different way of thinking of how they think the world should be run, or how Australia, or how we all should be living in this country.

5 Everybody has got a great idea. Sure, it's a great idea, but, okay, it's your boat, you float it. Take it over there. I've got my own. I'm still doing - dealing with my own demons right now. And I have carried that from the 60s. So - and it's good, because if I didn't have any of that, well I don't think I would be still alive. I would probably be gone like the rest of the boys because a lot of the guys - like you lose hope. Hope after a while. You know. You lose hope. Especially when you have got no father figure there. Even your [REDACTED] can't fill that void. They can only show you what they know. But they are also limited too, because they don't know enough, they haven't been taught enough.

10 Where we were taught a lot of things but like we were caught up with being young fellas and we just wanted to run through the jungle like wild fellas. And it was great. But it was the destruction and the death of watching these old fellas. Once one old fella died they just kept going and going and going and going. And we are thinking
15 hang on, all these old fellas are dying - pretty soon we are going to lose - we lost them. And the most important thing about them is that we lost our identity, it went with them. Our language, you know, our culture. Everything that was - these old fellas had was meant to be given to us. They never give it to us because they weren't allowed to. They were bound by the white man's ways and the laws.

20 So, I think everybody in this country today, they ought to be happy because they are living on the misery of a lot of old black men and black women who tried so hard to protect our own people. You know, and own our kids. And, you know, look what they have - look what the city has got to offer everybody else except for the black
25 fella. It is freaky, isn't it.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: We get a flag on the MCG.

30 **WILFRED CARTER:** Yeah. You know.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: In the middle.

35 **WILFRED CARTER:** The flag, yeah, you know, it's a - it's good but also sold the copy right on that, so I don't know what they were thinking when they done that. That was our flag and yet people are - people are jumping up and down about it being put on these thingos with Palestine and all that. So, you know, if the black fellas want to do that, that's fine. You know. They supported it - if they are going to support something like that, that's fine. But they really need to have a look about what has happened here in this country.

40 What goes on over there in those other countries, that's fine, you know, let them deal with it. We should be fixing up what's going on here because our country has been overrun so bad right now, we don't know who is going to be who in the next, you know, the next 10 years. We don't even know if we - black fellas are going to
45 survive. I mean, who is to say we haven't got terrorists running around them with a bomb strapped to them right now hey.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: It's all changed.

WILFRED CARTER: And that's the reality that we have to live in, because I can say there could be a bomber down there. A bloke - yeah, right. We are not in the
5 Middle East. No, how many people from the Middle East live here? How many people from England, America? You know, Africa? How many from all those countries that came here with all - came from war-torn backgrounds and came here with their baggage? They didn't leave them back there, they bought them with them. You look at a lot of the guys here, like I look at Victoria and they say it's running
10 raggedy with the youth. Victoria is jumping up and down because these youth got out of control, when they look at the Top End up there, they branded those kids so bad up there. They are locking 10-year-olds up for a fine.

How are they meant to learn? How are they meant to learn about their identity, who
15 they are? How are they going to learn in jail? You know, I think those kids, what they are doing, they might be destroying a lot of things up there, but have they sat down and asked these kids what's happening? You know, a slab of beer up there can go anywhere to \$150. You know, it mightn't get out to the mission, but that money off the mission went to pay this white man for that grog. He will still serve the going
20 to these black fellas and make them look real bad up there. But when the shit hits the fan down here, they are going to say, hang on a minute, who do we blame? Now we are going to blame the parents up there.

They have got curfews on them up there. I remember when curfews used to be
25 around a long time ago. We weren't allowed to be in town. I know all about curfews. And I thought that those times died out. They are still going back to the old days where the white man is going to ride down the street on his horse and shoot you. And that's what's going to happen soon. They are going to start - they are going to take up arms there soon and start shooting, them black fellas. And that's about the reality of it
30 all. But how do you - how you treat those kids different to these kids here? Okay. They might be from another country, but that doesn't give them the right to run around here ragged. Our kids can't do it, our kids have - as soon as they done that they were locked up straight away.

35 We had jails here for them straight away. Now they are going - because there is not many Koorie kids in the city any more they don't know who to chase after now. They can't blame us. They can't blame us anymore. So - yes, it's just - I don't know, it's a world that we all got to work out which is the best path for us and we can't go back to go forward. We can't go forward unless we know what's behind us. Because that's
40 our identity and that's who we should have been. That's who I should have been today. You know, I should have been this person, I should have been able to speak my language. I should have been able to do a lot of things but I can't. I know a lot of things I've done I was- I made - I pressed bricks for a living down home.

45 Then I went into a bricklaying apprenticeship, got - you know, I was building houses for white people to live in. And I done that with pride, you know.

And I made these houses with the best of my ability and I - and I go around to all these houses now and I still look at them and I say, "I built this." I done this one, I done that one." That's really great to have, but it's not enough because I have - there's nobody to show. I could be the greatest builder in the world but I have got nobody to show it to. I can say, you know, this is for you too, my boys. But this is your journey, this is my journey, this part. But you've got to do this from here on in. So this is - all this stolen stuff, I - I don't know how we - how I can get - I'm not looking for compensation, I just want to know where I fit in into this country, in my own country. Where do I fit in? Am I - am I - am a tiger snake? Am a Aboriginal man?
5 Am I Wilfred Carter? Who am I? So -
10

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: So you - because were born in - you come up through the 60s like I did. I reckon the 60s and early 70s, major changes.

15 **WILFRED CARTER:** Changes in the 70s, they came around but they didn't do it the way it was meant to pan out. Like they still had us - you know, they kept doing it until - the stuff still goes on today. Still stuff goes on today where they take Koorie kids away from their mothers and fathers. I mean, [REDACTED] had it done to [REDACTED], but as it is it's turned around where [REDACTED]. So whatever
20 happens any of my family, well I will know straight away where they are. Where back in those days when we got sent away, nobody knew where we were.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: Because in the 60s like we were losing our elders in the 60s. They were born in the early 1900s, late 1800s and they were passing away when we were kids.
25

WILFRED CARTER: Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: And we were losing that connection just from them passing away.
30

WILFRED CARTER: And they came through horrible times to get that far. You know, to live that long.

35 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1:** Yes.

WILFRED CARTER: And they were meant to teach us but they were told not to. And, you know, what these old fellas went through must have been, you know, just horrible. I would hate to be in the time with those old fellas, you know, just trying to compete with the - with a frigging cow. That's what it was all about. They were getting their lands taken and put a mission for the sake of a cow and a sheep. So it would have been really good to know all of that, but.
40

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: Looking down there.
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WILFRED CARTER: The old fellas, you know, it's just - they were - I don't know. I - I wish I could say I knew it was how they felt about things, but, you know, just knowing that they couldn't tell me it hurts.

5 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1:** Yeah.

WILFRED CARTER: You know. And what we all grew up, I know that being in the city, being a black fella in the city is different to being a black fella out in the sticks.

10

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: Definitely.

WILFRED CARTER: And, you know, all us black fellas are like moths. We are drawn to the bright lights of the big city. We all came down at one time or another and experienced it. I remember coming down when I was 16 - 17. It was a tattoo shop down the end of Flinders Street, we went down there and got a tattoo there. Now it's not there anymore. But when we came down, having a look at the city, it was just like a rat race. You know. I - I had never seen so many white people in all my life. I was thinking where do they all come from? Where do they all live? What are they all doing here? [REDACTED] said this is a big city, this is Melbourne. I'm going to go over to Fitzroy first. And I heard stories about Fitzroy, I said "Are we going over the park?"

25 Yeah, yeah, we are going to go over there". Because every time we get told if we were going to come this way, if you are in the city, either go to St Kilda, the park in St Kilda or Fitzroy. That's where you will find - somebody will know somebody who has related to us. And that was the message. Like all us guys from our side we came down. We all knew if we want to end up in Melbourne we will end up in Fitzroy. And then we know who is there, somebody we knew who was there. And it was good. But, like, I just couldn't stand it. There was way too many people up here for me to - and there is just way too much trouble for me to get into, way too much trouble. So it was good to go back home, you know.

35 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1:** Especially at 16, 17.

WILFRED CARTER: The boundaries were unlimited, you know. But, you know, being a mission boy and coming off, you - we were always bound by the gate. But once we got off of there - you know, we didn't have our fathers and mothers saying, "Behave, make sure you do this. Make sure -" no. Get out there - man, what do I do? "Are you coming with me?" "No, no, I'm doing this". "I will go and do it myself". And we get back home and swap stories. "What did do you? You know. When are we going to do that again? Not for a while yet". Because, you know, stories get back home there, boys, not allowed to do any of that. But the best part about it was we used to come down and play footy. We all come down and play against the stars. Shep, and I would go to Rombo and Mildura and all that.

45

That was the beauty, we would go out and play football and we would meet all these players, and "You are related to this fella. You are related to this mob here". And that's how we started to get to know each other. And now I know that I can travel to Mildura and I know I've got family up there. I can go to Geelong. I have got people
5 out there that I know is related to me. Dimboola, Horsham, I can go all the way up to Lismore and I have got people up there. So that was a good part of when I was a young fella travelling around, but it was also a dangerous time too because, you know, there was a lot of things that could happen. But coming home was - probably the best thing about it is coming home where I sit back and unwind and think, I
10 wonder what dad and mum would think about today if they seen what I had done?

I wonder what they would think. I think dad would probably kick the hell out of me and mum would say, "Dad, leave him alone." But it would have been nice to go home with stories like that and tell them. And I've been down to the big city, I seen -
15 I walk with you and dad and, you know, things like that. But when you lose all that stuff you don't - you keep it to yourself and then sometimes somebody will come along and ask you to say something like today, and it brings out a lot of good stuff. A lot of good stuff. A lot of it's - it will hurt, but it's - it's meant to do that. It's meant to keep me - keep me sane, keep me who I am. Otherwise if I didn't have that attitude
20 where I can, you know, break down, well what's the point in talking about things?

You know, if you can't - can't get it all out. So it's been in - and I'm not the only person who has it like that. There are - like I said, a lot of us men were born in these times. It was dangerous times and we all understood that, but the danger we flirted
25 with and sometimes we flirted a little too much with it, and that's where we got taken away. But the worst part about it was just trying to understand how the mothers and fathers felt about what was taken away from them. And they didn't get the chance to see them when they got older into grown men. Now, those same mothers and fathers and those sons and daughters now, they are all dead. And how do you - how do you,
30 you know, justify that stuff? How do you justify it? You know.

I asked - Australia has got so many deadly secrets it doesn't want to give up. And yet they can whinge about the rest of the world by "You fellas shouldn't be doing that over there, shouldn't be -." Those fellas want to get their act together in this country
35 because it's going to be overrun soon. And hopefully it won't happen in my lifetime, I hope I'm gone at least 100 years before it happens. But, you know, black fellas that come from the bush, we all have different ways of dealing and different ideals. So I remember coming down and the Fitzroy medical that was here, I walked up the street there and had a look for it, the old medical centre that was there.
40

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2: The Aboriginal health centres? Yeah, yeah.

WILFRED CARTER: Yeah, I went up there looking for it there early this morning. I'm sure I walked past it because I was looking at it, but it is a shop now. And I
45 remember, gees -

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2: You are talking about Gertrude Street. Yeah, yeah.

WILFRED CARTER: Where they used to have the old medical centre there.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2: That's right, it used to be there. That's right, yeah.

5 **WILFRED CARTER:** I remember walking there, thinking is this the shop, is this the medical centre here? Because I remember it, I think it was 1970 - I think it might have been 1970-71. I think it was - because we ended up coming down we would stay at some people's palace here.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2:** Right.

WILFRED CARTER: And yeah that was a while back. But I remember that - the medical centre where I walked up there and I was having a look around for it, and I was thinking it has got to be that shop here, it's one of those shops here. And then I got further and I had a - took some photos of the Charcoal Lane there. It was really good. And then I walked over to the park and I think, this is where it all happens, right here.

20 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1:** It still does too.

WILFRED CARTER: And it does. And I went over there - because I remember walking there a few years back, I went over there with three grand in my pocket, just after I got paid. And I went over there and the weekend I had up here was the greatest weekend I had. Man, it was best time I had ever had. I paid my way into the park, and when I left, I left them with a lot more than I came with. You know, it was great. You know, if I didn't know anybody by the time I left the park I knew who was - I was related to, I knew where to go, I knew I had a bed. I knew people who was willing to, you know, take me home and keep an eye on me.

30 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1:** Look after you.

WILFRED CARTER: They knew where I came from. They knew my side and they knew my people, and they also knew my mother's side of people. That was the beauty of coming down the city. But getting caught up with it was totally different, because this is a new - this is a different world what I'm used to. Like a lot of us country boys, we would come down and have a look at the bright lights. But, yeah, it's pretty good when it's - when it's there for a little while, not all the time. I would rather go home where the air is clear and you know -

40 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2:** You can see.

WILFRED CARTER: Yeah, where I can see for miles. Yeah. It's - and like a lot of the women, I - I just feel so - so - I don't know. It's not - it's not sorrow, it's just I wish could do more for them. Because a lot of the - a lot of [REDACTED], all of [REDACTED] all [REDACTED], they just, they - they had nobody to protect them in the father's side, since because what they were doing, there were getting taken away.

And these old white guys used to come out and get all the fellas drunk and try to get all the old girls out in the scrub. It was working for a while until we decided to go out there and straighten these old bastards out and burn their cars and beating the hell out of them. We were flogging white fellas every Friday night, burning the cars. Yeah,
5 ring the police. Get the police. The police wasn't going to come out and get them. The police were going to come and say, "Man, you guys shouldn't be here, you have got to go home and tell your wives". We would go into town to the pubs there, "Come out. Come on home. We know what you are coming out for". When we told on one white guy, the other guys say are you guys out there doing that?

10 Don't go out there. Pretty soon you are going to go out there and you are going to get killed. So those old white fellas that came out there, when they come out we were just beating the hell out of them because you just don't do that. You can't do that to any white fella or any white woman in town. You get charged for rape and all that
15 sort of stuff. So, you know, the judicial system, they in those days and what we have today is still for the white man but the black fella will always be right down underneath. They will have special cells for him all the time. So it's a - it's sad that we - we all have to live in - in a manner that we do in our own country.

20 But then again, we are here, we are not going anywhere. We have got - like I've got 11 children so I'm pretty happy. I have got 17 grandchildren, and it's - I know in my bloodline, my grandfather's bloodline, I go down - I go down a long, long way. I go down through the times. So I'm happy in that part. If my father and mother told me about, you know, I shouldn't go out and have all this family, well it's too late. You
25 should have told me in the beginning when I was a teenager. But when you are a teenager you feel like you are 10 foot tall and bullet proof. You are running down in the city in the big smoke and bright lights and you say, no, no, no.

30 But yeah, right up until I was 16, that was probably the horrible times of my life was then. It was just - I just happened to meet a young girl and that changed everything. It changed the whole dynamics and on how I was living and what I - what my purpose was. So I still don't know what my purpose is, but when I met her I knew what my purpose was going to be and we ended up having three boys. And I realised that I'm a father now but I didn't have a father. I - I watched my partner's father, you
35 know, talking and all that, and I didn't know how to be a father. I just done things the way I did and the way the wheels turned, the cogs have turned nice and gentle and slow, it was all good.

40 And when you are a father that young, you just - you don't know what the rules are and nobody is going to tell you the rules. And if they are going to tell you the rules they are your rules, they are not mine. So I've got to work my own rules out and which way is it. So me and my - my partner back then, she has passed on since, because I was on the mission she was from Bairnsdale, nobody liked us and we didn't like any of those. But it - what we done was when we had our first son is it
45 changed the dynamics to everybody. Now, I wasn't going to leave Bairnsdale because she had my son, and she wasn't going to leave me because I was her partner and we were going to be together for a - now we got these - we got our son.

Lake Tyres and Bairnsdale had to accept what was going on with just us two, and when they finally accepted me into Bairnsdale I was - I was over the moon. Then I went back out to Tyres and I tried to get them to accept back home. And it took a little doing, but it got done but it was a long time. But at the same sense, it was good.
5 But because we were so young we had a clear path. But that path we didn't know where it was heading, what was in front of it or how to steer right on it. We just done it the way we did and we were - we ended up with really the best three boys in the world, I reckon.

10 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1:** So another question, is your wife or partner, is she Aboriginal?

WILFRED CARTER: Yes.

15 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1:** So that I'm just trying to think of how many issues at Tyers and the issues at Bairnsdale.

WILFRED CARTER: Well, the issues were, we were a mission breed.

20 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1:** Yeah.

WILFRED CARTER: And she was outside and from - well, her father was -

25 **UNIDENTIFIED MALE 2:** A bit of class, hey.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: That's what I'm thinking.

WILFRED CARTER: Well, us black fellas, we were hated by other black fellas. You know, even when we played footy we were - we weren't allowed to stay in
30 town. Not because of white fellas, as well as the black fellas too we weren't allowed to be caught in town. And you know, every town is different, every mob differed. So if we came to Sale. Like, we know they were over there, likes sort of out there, uppity blacks. And Bairnsdale were, yeah, the guys up there are all born around, all of us are the same. But yeah, we are mission breeds, we don't care. We will just take
35 it up to anybody. And that's how we were.

Like getting in carloads to go shopping, it was the norm for us. But when I look back on it today, I'm thinking why did we have to do that? Why would black fellas so - so
40 against each other. And, you know, I looked at it and I was thinking it wasn't the black fellas, it was the white fellas . It was those guys who were putting us against each other. Okay. You fellas are here in town living with us, you have got to live our way, you have got to live our style. Don't do what them blacks are doing on the mission. You know. You get that when you go into different towns. I think when I was told that we were all wild black fellas from the mission, I would say, "I'm a
45 mission boy". "Oh, not you, you are different". I would say "How am I different? You are probably looking at one of the most nastiest person off the block".

And they would say, "Well are you?" And I say "I can't be, but how can you tell that I'm different to you? The only difference is that I live on the mission, you live out here. You live in mainstream. I'm still surrounded by all the black fellas out there".
5 Yeah but I don't get to learn like what they did learn. They didn't get the same as what I got either. They were losing the same, you know, identity that I was. Just that they didn't see it. I could see it, we could see it from the mission, but they couldn't see it. And yet we were branded. They were all losing exactly the same as we were losing.

10 It's just they - they hadn't accepted it and they haven't accepted it today because they have been - we have been - all our mates now, we all got mates go home, say here is my mate here, this guy knock around back here and I played footy with this guy. Yeah, they are mates and mates. All I had back in the day were brothers when I was growing up. Brothers and cousins, that's all I had. We didn't have much. We had
15 brothers and cousins. You know, that's why we were so different because we would go to town there and then guys would say, "Come on, I'm going to pick a mate up, we are going to go down and do some fishing".

I would be thinking we are going to pick gubbo, pick a black fella up. No, we have
20 going to pick gubbos up. What? Where am I? Why aren't we going fishing with black fellas. You know, where are all the black fellas in this town? The people who come around and hate us from the mission, where are they all? We go hang around with all the white fellas and go fishing. I didn't understand that side of things. You know, I wanted to go and see all the black fellas who was, you know, calling me
25 names. Because I wanted to really know why. And when I think about it now I think it is because they were - like I said, they were losing the same as I was, it's just that they couldn't see it.

I could see it because they were taking black fellas off the mission, they were
30 branding all the black fellas out. I could see the old women and old men there just die of loneliness, and that was the worst part of it, watching them die of just being lonely because they didn't have their children around them, you know, their sons and daughters. Yeah, I know how we all have different stories, but they - they penetrate
35 so deep that they make you so you don't forget. Don't forget.

So I'm hoping I get all my stories out before I end up with dementia or Alzheimers, because it's important that I - I tell - well, when I finish here I'm going to go home and sit down with the boys and my daughters and that and then and I'm going to start
40 from the beginning all the way through.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: Mmm.

WILFRED CARTER: So I will bring them right up to - to today of what I've done, because, yeah, everything I have experienced needs to be - needs to be passed on to
45 my sons and daughters and grandies to understand the reason why you are here is because I had to go through all this, and your mother had to go through all this.

But we had to go through the same as - you guys are getting a good ride right now but the journey I was on was totally different and the journey that my dad had and my mum had was even worse. So, you know, as we move forward, our lifestyle looks like it's easy but it's not. We have got stories there that's going to, you know, bring you back down to earth and make you realise that you're a part of a great nation. And we've got to get it out to our boys otherwise everything we know from the time that we grew up is going to be lost forever. And there's no amount in the museum or schools can teach that will be more important to them than what we can give them to by what we know and done by tongue because that's the way we should have been learning from the very beginning.

Yes. I don't know, I - I think sometimes I think we are a right out there. I get caught up in my own little world, but it's the world that I know to be the best for me because I - it's like the change something out of there I know it's going to - it's going to change dramatically everything for me. And then I will look back and think, you know, I will start second-guessing everything and I will say, was it right for them? Was it right? Was it wrong or what. But the way I grew up I know that everything was right and everything was wrong. It's just a matter of which one do I want to muck around with. I don't want to really muck around with it, I just want them there to keep me there.

You know, make sure that I understand who I am. The reason I got this far is because of what I went through. And not only that, all the people I love they all went through the same too. And, you know, some before me, some after me, some are still going through it now. And that's one of the worst things about it. People are still trying to adjust to the past of what we've been through because nobody has ever sat down to us and spoke to us about how we felt about being taken away or, you know, being branded as a mission person. Or nobody ever told us, sat down and asked us, you know, do you think it's right what happened?

I think it's because the answers they are going to receive are - is - do we really need to know that? Well, why did you ask the question? If you are going to ask the question, be prepared for the answer. You know, don't go out there and, you know, dance around and if you are going to ask a deadly serious question, expect the answer to be just as deadly. You know, nothing was ever sugar-coated for us. When we were running around, when we were running from these white fellas in shiny cars, we were running for our lives. That's what we were running for. And I'm glad I done all that. Because, you know, I - if I - if I didn't do any of that I don't think I would be alive today.

I reckon I would have died of - probably in the 80s. Because I had a - I had it in my head mentally that I wanted to be dead before I was 50. So I didn't want to live in world because I didn't have a mother or father. I didn't have my brothers and - I didn't want to live in the world because nobody wanted me. That's how I felt. I felt like I was - you are not worthy of being homing with us, you are not worthy of being here with these fellas, you are not worth of being here.

The beauty - the best part that of when I turned 17 my son came along, then I had a purpose which meant that my partner and I, we had - this is our life, this is our journey. It's nobody else's. It's got nothing to do with your mother, my mother, this is our journey. So we will do it the way we see fit. And we did. We did. We enjoyed it.
5 And we separated but we always maintained, you know, the greatest friendship for each other.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: Yeah, good.

10 **WILFRED CARTER:** So that stayed with us because we came through times where times were pretty tough, you know. They were running back and forwards to New South Wales and back in those days they were - they were facing their own demons as well. So, yeah, I was pretty happy that I run into her and I grew into a man very quickly. And that's something that, you know, when you get that you hold
15 on to that with both hands as tight as you can. Because that's the only thing that's going to help you, save you through life. Because now everybody looks at you and says, "You're a man now, you're not a boy. Act like a man". Okay.

I have seen how all the men - well, I don't want to act like that man, I'm going to try
20 to act like a man that I - I got respect for. Then again, I got to act like this man because I'm going to go down a path like that and I'm going to face it just the way he has. So it's - it's, yeah, I guess it's a - it's damned if you do and you are damned if you don't. But if you don't do you are never, ever going to understand the feeling. Because you are meant to have a - you are meant to be shaken to the core to wake
25 yourselves up and say, okay, you are not going to do this to me again ever. You are not going to do it to my kids, you are not going to do it to my people.

You know, if I was 20 years younger, yeah, I would be walking around that
30 everywhere. You're not going to do that to my people anymore, I'm strong enough to stand here and fight you and I will do right now. I'm glad because I (indistinct) these days because I really had an attitude where I was angry. I was angry at the world. And I was angry with my own people more than anything. I just - I had so much anger for them, but now I think about it, that anger, you know, it helped me to understand why they were like that.

35 But I shouldn't have been that angry with them. But I couldn't control it because I didn't know how to control it because I wasn't taught. And yet I knew what that guy was doing and the struggle he was going through. And I also hit that road. I knew the struggle straight away and I think to myself, why was I so angry at them all? Now I
40 know why. I shouldn't have been angry, I should have been, you know, just understandable. But being young you don't understand stuff like that and nobody teaches you.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: When you are young you don't put yourself in their
45 shoes.

WILFRED CARTER: You don't. You look at them and say, "Oh no, I'm not going to do that. I'm going to try to be better than that". But you don't. There will come a time in your life where you will go straight down that road and you won't know it until you stop it in and turn around and have a look and say, "Oh, shit I'm here now. What do I do?" Well, the best thing to do is just knock the wall down and keep on going straight through. Don't turn around, because everything is behind you.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: All right. How did you go?

10 **WILFRED CARTER:** Yeah.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE 1: Do you want me to turn this off?

15 **WILFRED CARTER:** Yeah.

<THE RECORDING CONCLUDED