

## VIVIAN (BURROWS) SHERBURNE



On the back is written:

*Dear Mom, Someday  
you will be real proud  
of me. Love, Vivian*

Yearbook picture, St. Euphrasia School  
at the Home of the Good Shepherd, ca. 1960

HOME OF GOOD SHEPHERD PROJECT

VIVIAN (BURROWS) SHERBURNE

TAPE NO. 3 R 1/2

Interviewer: Toby Harris

Location: Camano Island, Washington

Date of Interview: February 26, 1999

TRANSCRIPT

3R 1/2

SIDE A

*Today is February 26, 1999. This is Toby Harris. I'll be talking with Vivian Sherburne at her home on Camano Island, Washington.*

I'm here with Toby. Toby's here with me so we can talk about the Home of the Good Shepherd which I was in for four and a half years.

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SIDE B

So Mother John came and got me at midnight. She told me it was time for me to get washed up. She said I was ready to go out in real life.

*When you were in 10th grade?*

Uh, hum.

*So she didn't want you to stay and graduate?*

Well, no. She just felt that I was ready to leave. I'd been there four and a half years. I was 18 years old or just short of 18 and she just felt that I could make it out there. But I wasn't allowed to go home and live so I went to live with my older sister and her husband.

*Judy?*

No, Frances.

*A different one.*

There are 7 sisters. So Frances and Andy were there to pick me up that night.

*Why did she have you leave at midnight?*

To this day, I don't know.  
*What time was lights out?*

9:00 PM.

*So she actually came up and woke you up and you had to pack everything? Is that how many of the girls left?*

Yes, just at odd hours.

*There wasn't any kind of ritual when people left at all?*

No.

*So you never knew when you were going to be released?*

No. As far as I knew, they could keep me there forever. And that's all I knew. I knew if the courts had the custody of me, from what I understood, they could do whatever they wanted with me. I had no sayso in my own life. I went to live with Frances and Andy, and I soon became the housewife and lived out the role of mistress. He was my first man.

*Let's go back to the Good Shepherd. Tell me about the dormitories. Describe to me when you walked in the front door. What was the feeling of the Good Shepherd Home, the general feeling that you might have from it? Then describe where things were if you remember.*

Strangeness.

*Strangeness?*

You walk in the front door, strangeness...because I didn't know about going into Mother John's office...came in the front door. At that time, there was a hallway, not an office. I came through the hallway, through the front doors and her office was to the right, the dining room was to the left. You had to walk this lo-o-o-ong hallway to get to the 1st floor, 2nd floor, 3rd floor. I went in there. Mother John introduced me to her and Mother Agnes and Mother Serena and Mother Michael so it was kind of like a community thing to meet all the nuns. And then I met Peggy, my big sister. After that, we went upstairs to the 3rd floor. That's where my dormitory was, on the 3rd floor. It was like a wall but it was open, kind of - it had shelves and stuff and there was 15 beds on each side, in the dormitory so there was 30 girls in a dormitory. They put me over by Mother John's side where her door was to her bedroom.

*So the nuns were right next to you?*

Yes, each floor, the nuns had a quarter. Mother John's was on the 3rd floor. And they had Hollywood beds because we had our little stand and stuff. We had little closets, lockers.

*What's a Hollywood bed?*

Single beds with a stand and a shelf on it. Hollywood beds, that's what they were. And Peggy had to stay with me for 2 weeks straight, except at night. She slept in the same dormitory. She had the bed next to me and she had to show me what time I was to be there for breakfast, where to go for school, where to go to work, what the rules were, what was applied, what the rules were of swimming time - that was my thing there - was swimming in that heated pool. I'd never been in a heated pool in my life. And I went up there in mid-freezing-winter and swam. It was just the most fascinating thing I'd ever seen in my life.

*So it was open all year round?*

Yes. But there was a fence all the way around the yard in back and the statue of Mother Mary in the wayback corner. That's where I went over the roll fence when I ran. We had the yard, the activities to walk and play and do things that kids do. But we didn't do kid things. We did dumb things.

*Did you ever have contact with other schools? Other Catholic schools?*

No. When we had dances, we danced with each other. We were never allowed any contact with other schools.

*But you had dances?*

Yes, she let us have dances, as long as it wasn't obscene or anything, it was fine. We had what we called Truth and Dare too. [untelligible] .....whatever you told you didn't get in trouble for it. [laughter] Couldn't get over that.

*Tell me who the nuns were....Mother John who was the director, who ran the home and then there were teachers. And then there was a house mother?*

There was a house mother but the nuns were the teachers. They didn't have schoolteachers. The nuns were the teachers. I knew Mother Serena, Mother Agnes, Mother Sebastian, two of my teachers.

*Were they traditional classrooms? How many kids were in the classes?*

About 15. There wasn't a big class. We had our math, our science, our spelling, our English, our history. It was more than just Mother Serena and Mother Sebastian for teachers but ... Mother Serena and Mother Sebastian and Mother Agnes and Mother Michael, there were a couple, I can't think of their names, but I loved them and adored them. They were good to me. It took me about 6 months, Toby, to learn that these people really cared. I didn't have to go around the corner, I didn't have to wonder if I was going to be beat up, I didn't have to wonder if I was going to be punished for something I didn't do. They taught me what caring was about.

*So though there was one girl once who was making the moves on you, you really didn't have a problem with that? It wasn't a common daily thing where you...*

No. Because I'm a very blunt, outspoken person and my belief was that you just did not do that. I just said if you keep coming at me, I'm going to fucking hurt you. I said, I am not gay. If you choose to be gay, that's your business but you leave me alone. That was how we would all get. They didn't like me, they'd stay out of my path.

*So for the most part, you felt safe there?*

Yes, I was. I can remember when I got out of Good Shepherd and I went to Frances' house, I was tweaked. That was the word I used then but I was scared to death. The doors weren't locked, there were no bars on the windows. Anybody could come in your house. I was freaked. It took me a long time to get used to that. I liked the security there [at the Good Shepherd] because I wasn't going to be hurt. I

knew as long as those bars were on those windows, and those doors were locked, nobody could get at me.

*So they had bars on the windows? On all floors?*

Oh, yes. And they only opened that much....the windows did. Any further and the bells went off.

*But you thought of the bars as keeping other people-*

Out. Yes, I did. Isn't that strange?

No.

But I did.

*Did you ever go in the front?*

Oh, yes. We were -

*Was there a gate?*

No. When you come up to Good Shepherd, you pulled up in the driveway and it was a round circle. If she knew that we weren't going to run or take off, we were allowed in the front. I only ran once. That was enough for me. I seen alot of sadness there. I've seen alot of things that I didn't think were right. But I was nobody. I've always been like that all my life, Toby, even as a little child, I can remember sitting on the front porch in Marysville thinking about things that worried me. I was always like this. Today I have bigger questions.

*What did you do at holiday time?*

I stayed there.

*Were there less people there?*

Yes, alot of the kids were home for the holidays. Because they earned the right. But I didn't want to go home - once I got settled in there. Only one time I got so mad at Mother John. She put me in a corner and I was there for a week and a half. And she was about ready to ship me out, to Chehalis. And I didn't want to go to Chehalis so I knew I better get off my butt and I better apologize to that woman. And I did because I didn't want to leave there, Toby. I never wanted to leave there when I left. I was secure there. They loved me; they didn't hurt me. [crying] They took care of me. Sorry.

*Oh, it's fine.*

I have alot of things to give back for now. What am I crying for? I just wish today that they had places like that. Alot of messed up kids out here. But I don't know what to tell you. We wore a uniform, got it here in my wallet.

*You have that picture.*

We had a white blouse, blue dress and buck shoes. And then we got to wear our own clothes after dinner, got to wear our own clothes for lunch too and wear our own clothes on the weekend. When you knew you were going to have parlor, I'd put my hair up on a Wednesday night in rollers and leave it until Sunday morning. [laughter] When I pierced my ears with a needle, stuck a needle through and then put a piece of hairbrush in so Mother John couldn't see it, trying to hide it, you know. And then I put the tattoo on my knee because I was mad at her, like I said.

I thought the front yard was the most beautiful place.

*The front yard? I was going to ask you whether there were the special places in the building or on the grounds that you-*

Yes, there was for me. The front yard was one of them because it had this tree and I didn't know what it was for years. Now I know - it's a monkey tree. And I had never seen one in my life. And I thought it was so gorgeous. And then another favorite, my favorite spot of all was going out and sitting with the statue of the Mother Mary. That was so beautiful and so serene. And it was so peaceful. It was never abused there. They never allowed anyone to abuse her spot - the new girls who came in, that thought they were bad, she found out they weren't bad [laughter].

And then I had a special place on the 3rd floor, above, in the attic. I used to like to go up and sit. I used to tell all the new girls about the dead nuns up there. We used to scare them.

*Was that the rooms that are next to the chapel?*

No. That was the attic upstairs.

*Even higher up?*

Higher up, yes. There was an attic up there.

*So you could get up there?*

But you weren't allowed in there. And we used to tell the girls to sneak in, there were goblins in there, the nuns were in there. Scare the hell out of them.

*Did the nuns ever take you on outings?*

No. The nuns never left there except to, if they had to go somewhere, they went but otherwise the nuns never left there.

*Did people from the outside come in and entertain you or educate you?  
Who came in? Who came from the outside?*

Our families.

*Okay. That's all. What about other professionals? What about medical care?*

No. That was all done right there. The doctor and stuff, it was all right there. Dentist-

*So a doctor would come and visit, dentists too?*

Yes, that was the first time I was ever molested. That's what I call it today. He was the dentist. He had me [leaning] back and then he put his hands down my shirt. And I "went off". And after that, Mother John, and see, again, she didn't believe me. She believed him. And after that, I said "if you ever leave me in this room with him again alone, I'll kill him". That was a big word with us, was "kill". Because I'd never had anybody touch me. So after that, she never left me alone; she knew I'd throw a fit. Nope, we never went outside for a doctor. The eye doctor, physical doctor, if we were sick, they were brought in.

*Was there a special room that was used?*

The isolation room.

*Where was that?*

It was up on the 2nd floor. It was like a hospital room. We called it the isolation room.

*Was it used for other things too?*

No.

*Like for isolation?*

It was used for, I don't know, before I went there, my sister was there. I heard horror stories of that place. There was tunnels underneath the building but they'd kick them down there and hose them down, like firemen's hoses, to punish them but I don't believe that. But that's what I heard. My sister, Judy, told me the same thing. Years ago, I bet bad things like that happened. But I don't know, Toby, my 4 years there, those nuns were good people. I've seen alot of their hearts broken, here with the girls. Hurting...even me...when I was in that corner for a week and a half, I deserved to be in that corner. I hurt Mother John.

*Now why did you sit in the corner?*

I had a little charge, a little sister and she was gay. We weren't lovers or nothing, but she was gay. Mother John didn't like her. She didn't like this girl and I don't know why. She shipped her off to Chehalis and I was mad. I just threw a fit; I was so angry because this girl was trying to change and in my opinion, Mother John made a mistake. She did the wrong thing. So I ended up in the corner because I called her a fricking nun. And she was going to hit me and I said "go ahead". She stopped herself. If I had of sat there a few more days, I'd a been down to Chehalis and I didn't want to be there because there was alot less hurting at Good Shepherd House. That was not where I wanted to be. My younger sister was in Chehalis.

*What was in Chehalis?*

Girls' home but it was alot rougher. It was like prison life.

*When you were there, the girls that were at the Good Shepherd Home, were they all court referred?*

No. They weren't all court referred. Some were court-referred; some were private referred. This one little girl came in, she was 12 years old and her parents put her

there because she wet the bed. But she had never heard dirty jokes, she had never been around anything rough or frightening. She hadn't ever said the word "damn". But inside of 6 months, she was one of the toughest little broads there. At that time, I never thought about those things, but when I think back now, what a waste. What a shame. That her parents locked her up for peeing in the bed. They not only got a child back, but they got a ruffian back. There's a lot of situations where people didn't belong there. There are a lot of situations where the girls did belong there. I was glad I was there. Because I truly believe today I'd be a drug addict or worse, I'd be dead. These [my] kids saved my life. I don't want to get separated from these kids. I've come a long way, girl.

*Did you have to go to chapel?*

Yes. We weren't forced to do their religion. We were asked that we respect, you know....I did my own Bible and I sat in the church but I didn't participate in the Catholic religion because I didn't believe in communion. I didn't believe you could walk in on Saturday nights and confess your sins or Friday night or whatever, then walk in Sunday morning, take communion and be all fixed. .... we were never forced to participate in the Catholic ceremony. We were just asked that we respect their religion as well as they respect ours. And that's what I did.

*And they required you to attend?*

Yes. We didn't have Sunday school class or nothing like that. We just had mass and they just asked us to pray and we all had church on Sunday morning.

*What about daily?*

We didn't have to go daily. But they had mass but those that didn't go were either in school or at their job. One or the other. But on Sunday, we did.

*When did you do your job?*

After school. We got out around 2:00 or something - I don't remember. And we went to our jobs and did our jobs and then had dinner.

*So you didn't have any other responsibilities or chores that you had to do?*

No, just to keep my part of my bed clean, my bed made, beds had to - you bounced quarters off of those beds. That's how tight they had to be made. You'd keep things in order and then if you got extra jobs doing trustee things, they'd let you do that. I did the mail one time.

*Did you get mail every day?*

Yes and the letters were read. And if she didn't approve of it, we didn't get it.

*What about letters that you sent out?*

They were read. And if she didn't approve of them, they didn't get sent out.

*So if you were a trustee, you got to deliver the mail to everyone?*

Oh, yes. I stole the mail once, god forgive me.

*You stole it from where?*

From Mother John's office, all of it. Because I was, this guy from Greenland was writing to me and she wouldn't give me his letters. And I wanted them.

*He was a penpal?*

He was a penpal, but I didn't know that at the time. She wouldn't give me those letters. So I went in her office when she wasn't around and I stole all of the mail and went in the bathroom and opened up all the letters and then ripped them up piece by piece and flushed them down the toilet. She never knew to this day. I never did it again either. There were things we weren't supposed to do. We'd go out on parlor and bring things back in our hair and underwear, cigarettes and stuff that we weren't supposed to bring in and we would trade or help somebody run away. If they wanted to run away, we'd all help. And the one thing you did not do is you did not steal from anybody, from girls, that was a code. You did not steal and you did not lay blame on somebody else. Cause if you did that, the girls gotcha. I know because I stole money my first day I was in there before I ran away. Trust me, they didn't like it.

*They didn't have caseworkers or counselors or anybody coming in for any of those girls?*

No. It was Ms. Kelsey put me in there and that was it. I never had a caseworker. I was ordered by the court to be there and that's where I was. When you became a ward of the court, that was it. They either decided to put you in a foster home or they locked you up and that was the end of it.

*Did you think of the Good Shepherd Home as a prison?*

No, I didn't. It was home. First home I ever knew. I learned alot, at times. I learned alot of things there that - I remember reading my first dirty book there. That was quite an experience - "Fight White Collar", that was the name of it. I remember I had all these funny feelings. I had no idea what they were about. But, in fact, that was the first dirty book I ever read. No counselors. You wanted to talk to somebody, you talked to a nun. Like I said, Wallace Prim, was allowed to come and see me anytime he wanted to. And that was unusual. For some reason, Mother John really liked him. If she liked you, you had it made. If she didn't like you, stay out of her way. I've seen the woman pick up a 300 pound girl and throw her down a hallway. She got caught piercing her ears. And what Mother John said, it went. That was the law. In fact, what any of the nuns said, went. I remember loving Mother Michael to death. Mother Michael, Mother Agnes, Mother Serena. They were just the coolest nuns. Michael was a little thing, you know. She used to always be hurrying, always running - not running but just walking really fast. She was in charge of the laundry.

*They all wore their habits then?*

Oh, yes. I can remember one time I peeked and I saw Mother John in her nightgown and her hair. I wasn't supposed to see that. But I wanted to. She had her hair cut real short like a man. Because they weren't allowed to have long hair. They only wore habits.

*Do you have anything else you want to say about Good Shepherd?*

I loved it there, Toby. I was sad when I left because I was going out into a world I didn't know. And believe me, I've been there, I've been around the block. When I, my whole life, I didn't know who I was, what I was about. They had no counselors, they had no way of helping the girls find out who they were or what they were about. That wasn't done meanly, it was just you were a ward of the court, you were locked out and they had the "say so". I don't think they took the time to...that's the only difference that I would do. If I ever inherited the money, Toby, I would open a Good Shepherd Home. I would and there would be staff of counseling, people there to help these girls understand why they are where they are and what they're into. And we did not have that. That was the only flaw as I grew older that I could ever see in that place, was the counseling. When you're locked up and 14 years old, you're a kid. You're a little child. You know nothing. And when you're locked up for 4 years of your life, you walk out and still knowing nothing. Why was I punished? Why was I locked up? Who am I? What am I? I knew nothing. And I learnt the hard way. I was never into drugs; I did my drug time but I learned life, the way it worked. I got married. I went to Minnesota, I stayed, they all left. I lived on the streets. I was never a prostitute. They taught me values and morals there. But I learned how to survive in this world. And I learned the hard way. I didn't know anybody so I went on the streets and I lived with winos and they taught me how to survive, how to take care of myself. I had a cop living at my motel so I could...

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**SIDE A**

I didn't know anybody so I lived on the streets and I lived with the winos and they taught me how to survive, taught me how to take care of myself. I had a cop that used to be living at my motel so I could.....

I did street counseling for 11 years in Minnesota.

*What are you doing now?*

Now I'm raising these kids and hoping to get registered for school for Fall so I can go to school and become a licensed counselor. Because I want to eventually open my own place. I want to work with CPS but not for CPS. I don't want to sit in an office. I work every day with kids. I work every day with parents. Let me get in my briefcase so I can show you what I do.

*Alright.*

Then I can show you what I do.

TAPE OFF FOR SEVERAL SECONDS.

*It's a picture of you in your uniform?*

Yes, I'll find it and then I'll send it to you. Okay? I'll do that. I don't look so cute anyway.

This is what I do. This is our Wendy's? that I go to. I work volunteer for Skagit Mental Health as a volunteer to open new programs and to close old ones.

*You're a peer counselor? For children?*

And parents.

*Around sexual abuse issues?*

Yes. And then I have-

*You feel that if you hadn't had that experience at Good Shepherd-*

I wouldn't be here. I wouldn't. That's the thing that people can't understand about me is that because I give so much for what they did for me. They gave me a life and they gave me values and morals and I didn't have that. I think today, my dad tried, in his own roundabout way, but you don't take a child like he did me when I was 9; he sent me looking for Cheryl, Tory and Penny and he saw me pick an apple off a tree. When I came home, I got a switch and when he got done with me, I was bleeding so bad that he had to hide me for a month. In them days, parents got away with that.

*So physical abuse as well as sexual abuse were your interests.*

Oh, yes. This is why I'm trying to get a group going. It's called T-TOP. I need 5,000 signatures before I can go to the Board or go to Olympia. I want to get some laws reversed. I think that parents are losing very much control of being parents to their own children because the state is way too involved. A child runs away, they don't look for them. A child hits their mother, they go to Denny's Youth Center. Or if a child hits a mother and she presses charges, the child goes to Denny Youth Center. The mother and father are not allowed by law to spank their children. You're not allowed by law to do anything but 1,2,3 magic and that's putting them in the corner. But when a child reaches 15 years old, how are you going to put them in a corner if they don't want to be there?

*What kind of control do you want to give parents now?*

I want them to be able to say that she don't want to be here, just like my 10 year old in there. Last week we got into a really big row and I got so mad, I said "that's it, Alan. I've had enough. I've had enough of your mouth, your attitude, your looks..." And I put him over my knee and I spanked him. And he started screaming bloody murder. "I don't want to live here. I don't want to be here." I said "that's fine, we'll fix that." I took him in the front room and I made him call and they couldn't even coherent him. I didn't beat him but you just look at him the wrong way and he'll start screaming. And that's okay too because that's part of his feelings. Anyway, I got on the phone to her and I explained to her what was going on, that I wanted him to understand, I'm your mother. I'm not here to abuse you. I'm here to help you to grow. But you can't abuse me. So if you don't want to be in this home, then we'll put you somewhere where you can be safe, so you're not out on the streets. So they came out here and talked to him; there's been a total change. Because he found out that, hey, you can't call the police. That don't work here no more.

Kids today - they have so much control over their parents. Their parents have so much fear - well, if I hit him or discipline him or take something away from him, I'm in trouble. Not the kid. So I want to reverse the laws. I don't want parents beating their children. That's not the answer. But I want them to come together as family and

start communicating as families. And I don't want the parents to have to have that fear of being hauled off to jail every time they decide to take control of the children.

I'm a meanie. We have a pretty good rapport around this house. These kids saved my life. And Guido's. My son last night gave me.....told us how much he loved me, that he knows, he believes and that he feels that if it hadn't been for me, he'd probably be into drugs or be in jail or somewhere today. And that I'm his mother. And then he told me that when they call me names at school, he says "you know what, yeah, that's my biological mother. Now you're talking about my mom." From a 13-year-old's mouth, you don't expect that kind of brains. I'm actually very proud and it makes me proud to know that because of him and Ed and Burgundy and Alan, I am where I am today.

And I want to go out and fight this world and I want to fight for our kids and I want our unity back. Probably a big dream in my head but, I want that unity, we need unity in our family. We need to know that we are a family and we're there for one another. I like my life. I love what I do with my life. I like who I am. Took me a long time to get there. [laughter] And every day that God gives me another day I just enjoy it. I do my own little things off to the side too, that I have my private time for. I'm not no perfect human being. I'm far from being perfect. I look at children as people, as human beings, not as something that we own because we don't. God gave them to us as a gift. And he must have been thinking alot of powerful things when it got to meeting these kids, cause these kids have been through things I still can't fathom in my life, how they survived it.

*When you look back now as an adult, at the Good Shepherd nuns, why do you think that it did make you feel safe?*

Because they showed me, they taught me that they cared about me. And they-

*How did they show you that they cared?*

By, if I had a problem or something, I could go to them without fear of being backhanded against the wall or if I needed something, I could go to them and say that without the backhand against the wall. I grew up- I didn't ask for Kotex from my parents, I didn't ask for a bra from my parents, I didn't ask for nothing from my parents because I was afraid of being hit. I don't know if that makes any sense to you, but going into Good Shepherd and being there for a certain amount of time, I began to feel very safe. Wasn't going to be beat up no more; I could make a mistake and not be abused for it. You know what I'm saying?

That first time when I put Tinkerbelle through that glass door, I thought I was going to prison. I did. And I was scared. But Mother John, had been watching, the scene for a few weeks down the road, so she knew what was going on. And what I did wasn't right but she probably put me in a position where it was either fight for myself or lose any respect for control of my own fate in that place and that meant that any of the girls could match, and I couldn't have that. So I put her through the glass door. I risked 5 months of getting my first parlor, 5 months. But I couldn't take it. But Mother John said... she should have taken the parlor, my right; I should have lost it because I broke the rules. But she explained that she understood what was going on and she had been watching the scene and that I wasn't going to lose parlor. I think right then and there I knew, this is what you call "home". It was a God-given thing. God had me there.

I have 7 sisters and one of them I like. I don't hate them, I'm just not part of their lives. I have 1 brother that I like because he always takes care of his kids. And I have a twin brother I'd like to find. My life is here, these children and what I can do for kids out there. That's what I'd like to do, what I got at the Good Shepherd.

TAPE OFF SEVERAL SECONDS.

We decided one day, this black girl, I don't remember her name but she had this teddy bear. And we decided it was old and decrepid and needed to be buried, that it had died. So 285 girls got together one day, went outside by Mother Mary the Magdalen, the statue, dug a hole and buried her, this teddy bear and gave it the whole mass, whole funeral, the whole thing. And Mother John allowed it. We were allowed to do silly things like this.

One time we helped a girl go over the fence right in front of Mother John and the nuns. And they told us if we helped her we'd be punished. And we didn't care. She was gone. And we stood right there while she went over the fence, wouldn't let no-one stop her. And we used to dig holes in the grass and smoke cigarettes. [laughter] What do you call those birds that dig down in the ground? That's what we looked like - ostriches. [laughter] It was so funny.

*Did you say that girl whose teddy bear it was, she was the first black girl-*

I've ever met. I had never seen a black girl. That's where I learned to dance. She taught me how to dance and I'm a good dancer, even today. In fact, she tried to set me up with her brother but I wouldn't go that. My dad was a very prejudiced man - you only went with white, even though we're more Indian than we are white.

Kitchen duty - I never did kitchen duty but one girl in there one time pissed in the cake batter. And served it to the nuns. That's horrid now when you think about it but we had our ways of getting even when we were mad. We did it. But it was the new girls that was the biggest kick. They'd come in and we'd sometimes scare all those new girls so bad. They would be freakin'. Like, one time, I got scared, the whole dorm on my side - it started with this new girl, this 11 year old that came in. We didn't realize it until about 3 weeks afterwards. At 2:00 every morning, we'd wake up to this sound like somebody was crawling across the brick wall on the 3rd floor, I mean, we scared ourselves to death in that place at times. For weeks and weeks this went on. And finally we just couldn't take it anymore so we made Mother John get up and hear it. Here it was the new girl gritting her teeth. Oh, God. We thought there was a monster out there. Because this was a Home of the Good Shepherd where God took care of everything and things like this didn't happen. And if they did happen, they were real.

We watched a girl, a girl come in from Alaska, she was what they call a habitual runaway. She ran away all the time. And she started running from the Home and she kept running. Well, it was about 5:00 in the morning, I woke up for some damn reason, I don't know why, but I looked out of my window and there was a body out in the yard. Pachenkos had gotten ahold of her - a gang. She ran away and the gang Pachenko got ahold of her and they raped her and I mean every one of them raped her and when they got done, they shoved coke bottles up inside of her and then when they were done with the body, they threw it back into Good Shepherd's yard. That's where they found her. It was the saddest thing because she just ran away. She was a habitual runaway. She wasn't a bad girl, she just ran away all the time.

When someone in the family died, we all grieved for that person. We were a family. We were a unity. Bad or good, liked or not, when things came down to it, we were together there, all one. It didn't matter. When I say, clique, it's like gangs today. When you're in a girls' home or if you're in a private school, you have your private cliques. If you fit in, you fit in, if you don't, you don't. You better learn to make it on your own. Or you ain't gonna survive it. And I learned to make it on my own. I was never a full trustee because I didn't want to be. I didn't want to take that privilege and abuse it. Because I knew I would. That was just the way it was. But I didn't ever want to run away again either. I knew I was safe there. I wasn't safe out there. Even at 18 when I did leave there, I didn't feel safe for a long time. Because that bar wasn't there. Those locked doors weren't there.

We used to bring in cigarettes in our hair and in our Kotex and we'd sneak booze in once in awhile and you didn't rat on anyone in there unless it was....when I ratted on Judy, I felt it was necessary. And I got the hell beat of me for it. And I took it because that was the law, you didn't wreck it and you didn't steal. You did that and we got you for it. You did that, you did that on your own. And I did steal from that one girl; never did it again. I stole money from her, to have alot outside. I got beat up bad, for ratting on Judy. Judy Smith.

*You got beat up by Judy?*

Oh, her and a few other girls. Wasn't just one when they came after you. It was a group rowe. And you took it. If you wanted to survive, you took the beating. And I took it and we became best friends after that.

*What did the nuns do?*

Nothing.

*They would iust ignore the fight?*

Yep. It was never done in front of the nuns.

*They might see that you had injuries?*

Oh, yes. we'd tell them we walked into something. That's what it was, that was the law there. I think being new... they accept it as well as we accept it. You follow the rules, you stay out of trouble. I didn't think I'd be there more than a year. I wasn't a bad girl. I didn't do nothing wrong. But I was there for 4 years. I had no teenage life. I had no young adult life. I didn't know what dating was. I swear to God when I walked out of that building, the first thing I'd see as a man, I'd kiss. Because I'd never kissed a man before. But I didn't.

**END OF TAPE.**

HOME OF GOOD SHEPHERD PROJECT

VIVIAN SHERBURNE

TAPE NO. 5 R 1/1

Interviewer: Toby Harris

Location: Camano Island, Washington

Date of Interview: March 23, 1999

**TRANSCRIPT**

**5 R 1/1**

**SIDE A**

*Today is March 23, 1999. I'll be talking with Vivian Sherburne as a supplement to our last interview. This is Toby Harris. Vivian is a former resident of the Good Shepherd Home. We're in Camano Island, Washington.*

*Vivian, you lived in the convent from about 1959 until 1963.*

Yes, I did.

*And this is your picture at that time. And how old were you in this picture?*

Fourteen.

*Fourteen and where was this taken?*

Home of the Good Shepherd.

*Did they take pictures of each person that came in?*

Yes and we had our annual yearbooks too. I lost mine, in Minnesota.

*So this was the picture that was in the yearbook?*

Yes. That was the picture that was in the yearbook. Something I've held onto from there.

*And you're wearing a uniform?*

Yes, blue dress, white blouse, buck shoes. That was our uniform.

*Tell me about your childhood and how you ended up at the Good Shepherd.*

I came from a dysfunctional childhood. A lot of beatings, a lot of sadness. My parents didn't know how to raise us. And I ran away finally. And that's when Mrs. Kelso, my caseworker, decided that I needed to be placed in the Good Shepherd. Because they didn't want me back with my dad. He was pretty violent with us kids. He didn't know how to raise kids. He worked hard, brought money in, did the best he could but he just didn't know how to resume with 10 kids. He didn't spank us when we were babies. He didn't discipline us when we were little. I was about 8 years old when I got my first whipping. I was 9 years old when I got my first, well, I got my first and last beating from my father. He beat me to a bloody pulp. I looked

like a zebra when he got done with me. And he hid me in the basement for a month. I didn't go to school for a month.

*How many brothers and sisters do you have?*

I have 7 sisters and 3 brothers.

*And where were you?*

In the middle. I have a twin. There's 2 sets of twins. Frances and Frank are twins, and me and Charles are twins. But he didn't beat me again like that. He slapped me around but he never beat me like that again. I was told later on in life that it was because I looked up at him and I said, "if I live long enough, I'll kill you." I shocked him. So he never touched me again. I mean, he whipped me but he didn't go to the extremes with me that he did the other kids. I was an angry kid. Then when they locked me up, I was real mad. Oh, I was mad. Because I didn't feel I had a right to be locked up because I was being beat up. So they put me in there.

My first day, I ran, with Barbara Cramer. I had a "big sister", Peggy was her name. I don't remember her last name. But each new person that comes in there gets a big sister. And she shows you the ropes and she shows you what you're supposed to do and what you're not supposed to do and if we get in trouble, she loses her points or her parlor. So she lost her parlor big time when I ran away. But I was back the same day. They picked me up in a bathroom.

*Who picked you up?*

The police. And they told me I could do it the easy way or the hard way. And I said, "well, we'll go the hard way." And I went back in handcuffs because I wasn't going to go back.

*And that was the same day that you-*

Yes. A couple of sailors picked us up and kicked us out of their car because they knew we were runaways from the Good Shepherd and they didn't want to mess with us. But it took me about a month to settle in there finally. I did. I didn't run away again. But I didn't make it real easy for them either, for about 2 to 3 months. And the girls didn't like me because I was the loner there and I fought back. 5 of them nailed me on the steps one day. They were going to beat me up and I just said, "come, bitches....you want to beat me up, come on. I'm ready for you." And they came after me and I wailed.

*So there was some kind of initiation when you first got there?*

Oh, yeah. You had your cliques. See, people think that at girls' homes, girls', boys' places like that, that they're run by the people - they're not. They're run by the kids in there. So are your prisons. They're run by the inmates. They're not run by the wardens or stuff like that. That's not true. We had our own cliques and I don't like cliques. And I don't like people hitting other people or thinking they're better than other people so I just stayed by myself.

*What were some of the codes....*

I'll tell you what you don't do when you're there. You don't run away and steal from the other girls. Because I did. I stole money when I ran away from there and that's a no-no. You don't snitch. You keep your mouth shut. If somebody is planning on running away, you don't tell on them. I did once. Because my girlfriend, Judy Smith, ran away with this other girl, I can't remember her name. And she fell 3 stories down, the one girl did. And then Judy went down and got her, carried her to the hospital. She broke her back. So I snitched on her for it. But I never did that again. I never did that again. If something came up, I left it alone. But we snuck in cigarettes. Some girls even snuck in booze sometimes there. It was funny. It was my home. After I settled in, Good Shepherd saved me. I will believe that for the rest of my life. That had it not been for me being at Good Shepherd, there's no telling where I'd be today. I wouldn't be here. And I know that. I know that for a fact.

We did some dumb things in there and we had some good times. We did some silly things. I went to school there. I went through the 10th grade. Mother Agnes wanted me to stay one more year and they would have put me in the 12th and I would have graduated. But I didn't want to do that. I wanted to get out. They were good people. Mother Serena, Mother Agnes, Mother Michael, she was one of my favorites. Mother John was my favorite. She was head of the girls, all of us. She sure put up with alot.

*She was there all the time?*

Oh, yes. They were there 24 hours a day. We had a house mother too. She caused a girl to commit suicide there. And it was never spoken of and never dealt with. Because things like that didn't happen in front of the nuns' faces. They didn't accept those kinds of things. And for people to think that was a home for unwed mothers - it wasn't. We had one unwed mother in there and she was only there for 2 weeks and then she was shipped out. Good Shepherd was for girls that ran away, girls that were abused at home, beat up and stuff like that. Judy Smith, my best girlfriend there, she was put in Good Shepherd because when she was a little girl, she accidentally burnt her family's home down. And from the time Judy grew up until the time the Good Shepherd got her, she lived in 1 room in the house. She was not allowed to eat with the family; she was not allowed to associate with the family; she was not allowed to talk with the family; she went to school; she came home; she went to that room. Until somebody finally called it in and she got out of there. They put her in Good Shepherd. They figured that was the safest place for Judy.

*Some of the girls were there because the court referred them and others were there for their own protection?*

Yes. And then there was girls who didn't belong in there. They didn't belong being there. The youngest one, I think, was 11. She was 10 or 11 years old. And she was put in there for wetting the bed. If that isn't a stupid reason, I don't know what is. She didn't know nothing when she came in there. By 3 months time, that was a hard core little girl. She had so much anger in her.

And then we had our cliques, like Vita Chapman, Dotty and all those girls that ran the Home of the Good Shepherd. Vita Chapman, I remember real well, didn't like her. And I didn't like Barney because she was Vita Chapman's slave, per se. And I had one girl come after me in there, wanted me to run away with her and get married. [laughter] That was awful. See, I didn't believe in those kind of things. I didn't believe in gay people. Now it doesn't bother me but when I went in there, I had

been brought up that it was not acceptable. I really didn't know about it but I just knew it was wrong.

*Was there alot of sexual activity going on there?*

Oh, yes. I can remember the first time I walked in, caught 2 girls together. I got sick. I puked, I was so sick. I had never...that's when I knew that those things were wrong. Oh, yes. They had that there. Mother John didn't accept it but it went on. No different than any other place. Girls, they're just as human. I was never involved sexually but I seen alot of it go on. Some of it was forced by the girls.

These girls were tough; they weren't some little "meecy mow" off the street; they were tough girls and you either survived there or you didn't. It was not any different. We did alot...I liked the Good Shepherd. I thought the place was great. But I knew my boundaries with the other girls and I did my own thing. I got in that one fight. Well, I got in a couple of fights. I threw a girl out of the bathroom door one time. She wouldn't leave me alone. And that's when I was first in there. She would not leave me alone. We'd call her Tinkerbelle. She wouldn't leave me alone. Finally, I got mad. She caught me in the bathroom and I just picked her up and threw her right through a glass door. And I thought I was going to lose my parlor for that. But I didn't because Mother John knew the situation.

I was probably one of the only girls there who was ever allowed to see a man there. And go out parlor with him. And to this day, I'm not sure why except that I knew Mother John really liked him. He was my sister's ex-husband and he came up there with my sister once to visit me. And then they got separated. Wallace Prim was his name. And he used to come up there and see me and take me out on parlors. He even offered to run away with me once. Hide me until I was 18. I didn't want to do that because I didn't want to get him in trouble. Mother liked Wallace Prim for some reason. I could see him in the evening; I could see him on Saturdays when I wasn't supposed to; whenever he got a chance to come in, I got to see him.

*Tell me what parlor is and what some of the other rituals were.*

Parlor is where you go in.....okay, first you get a big sister and then you have to earn parlor. It took me 5 months to earn my first parlor. That's where you earn stars, 4 gold stars a month. If you get 4 gold stars, then you get 2 hours parlor, outside the Home of the Good Shepherd.

*So parlor is leaving the Home?*

Yes, or you get to visit inside. It just depends on how you behave. I never lost any of my parlors. I made sure of that. My mother came up there and saw me once. My dad never came and saw me. Judy came up and saw me once. I was in the chapel and I recognized her by the scars on her legs. That's how I knew who she was.

*Your sister?*

Because she had jumped out of a cop car doing about 100 miles an hour. Thought she was smart.

*How often did you have parlors? Only once a month?*

Once a month for 2 hours. And you better earn them.

*Were they always the same day of the week?*

Yes. Sunday. They were on Sunday because I used to put my hair up on Wednesday and leave it up in rollers until Sunday. So it was nice and curly for Sunday. That was funny.

*What about holidays? Did you have longer parlors for holidays?*

No. Some of them got to go home for holidays. I was there 3 years, I think, about 3 years before I made my first parlor outside, to go home for a visit.

*What did you earn gold stars for?*

For being good. I mean, we had to show that we obeyed the rules, that we did our chores, that we did not get in no trouble. That's how we earned them.

*What were the rules?*

Couldn't smoke inside the building. You had to be in bed at 9:00. You had to do your chores. Couldn't get in no fights or arguments. And you just had to behave, that's what you had to do.

*And what were your chores?*

I worked in the laundry room. I was a presser.

*A presser?*

Yes. You know how much a nun's outfit weighs? Fully clothed? 40 pounds, on them.

*So you pressed-*

Nun's outfits. And the sheets and the pillows and the girls' uniforms and stuff like that. That was my job. And that was hard. But it was a good job because it was a skilled job where I could go outside in the world but I couldn't ever get a pressing job because I was too short. You had to be taller than I was. I'm only 5'3".

*Did the laundry do any outside work or only-*

Oh, no. We did the laundry.... I don't know. I don't think so. We just did the inside work.

*When did you do your chores?*

After school. From 3:00 until dinnertime.

*Every day?*

Every day.

*Did you have homework?*

Oh, yes. But it was real simple. Being in Good Shepherd and doing homework, being at Good Shepherd going to school is like going to school in grade school. That's how easy it was. They weren't up to, really updated, I don't think.

*How many people were in your classes? Tell me about your classes.*

How many? It wasn't a whole lot of us in classes, like maybe 15, 16 girls to a class, I think. We didn't have big classes because some of the girls chose not to go to school. And if you didn't go to school, you worked all day.

*You could choose not to go to school?*

Well, yes. They didn't really force the issue. If you weren't going to go to school, you weren't going go to school. Some of them did that.

*But then you had to work all day?*

Yes and you worked all day. But I wanted to go to school. I can remember when I first went in there, we had to call the nuns, "Mothers". And I wouldn't do

that. I told Mother Agnes, "you're not my mother. You ain't my frigging mother." That's not the word I used but... I said "I don't have to call you mother." Took me awhile to adjust to that. And then I almost lost it at Good Shepherd. I got in trouble. I was really mad at Mother John. I was angry because one of the girls that came in, I got her for a little sister and she was gay. And Mother John found out she was gay or something, I don't know what the deal was but she shipped her out of there and shipped her to Chehalis and I got really mad at Mother John for it. Because I felt that she was doing really good. And that she didn't need to be shipped out to Chehalis. So I ended up arguing with Mother John and I called her a "freaking nun". She didn't belong in that habit. I said some pretty harsh things to her. I remember that. She sat me in the corner out in the hallway and I was there for about 2 and a half weeks. And then I overheard that if you're there in the corner more than 2 weeks, they ship you down to Chehalis. And I thought, no, no, I'm not going there. So I got up and I apologized to Mother John and I got myself out of the corner. Boy and I never did it again. Because I didn't want to go down to Chehalis.

*You spent 24 hours in the corner or just during the day?*

No. We spent 24 hours a day in that corner. We slept in that corner.

*Did you get meals?*

Oh, yes. We got our meals.

*It was just a corner ...was there a door?*

No. You sat in the corner in a chair.

*Was it in an office?*

No. In the hallway.

*In the hall of the first floor? Right at the entrance?*

Yep. Where Mother John's office was.

*Tell me when you first walk in the building, what you see.*

When you walk in the building, there's an entryway. I walked in there. There was an entryway. I don't remember if there was a nun's desk there or not, I don't think so, just an entryway. Because I had a suitcase in my hand and we came in kind of that way....

*To the right?*

Yeah, we walked in and to the left was her office, Mother John's office. And then a lo-o-ong hallway. Very long hallway. But her office was to the left. And I went in there and Mrs. Kelso was with me and she introduced me to Mother John and Mother Agnes was in there and I told them who I was. And they knew who I was. Mother John seemed to be pretty excited about me being there because a couple of years before that, my sister, Judy was in there. And Judy was her "pet". Judy did no wrong. She did but Mother John didn't see it that way. She took a bunch of girls and ran one time, took the keys and ran. And Mother John blamed it on the other girls because her Judy didn't do no wrong.

But I remember standing in that office and I was standing between Mother Agnes and Mother Michael and Mother John was at the desk. And they told me that I was to call them Mother John, Mother Agnes, Mother Michael. And I said "pfft, you're not my mother. I won't call you Mother John. I won't call you Mother Agnes. I'll call you anything but that." I was a brat. I was a real brat. But I did end up calling them Mother John and Mother Agnes and Mother Michael.

But we had a lot of good times there. I did. We had a heated swimming pool. I had never ever seen that before in my life when I went in there. That was my favorite spot. In the middle of winter, I'd go out swimming because that pool was heated. I thought that was fabulous. And if we got caught smoking, we got in trouble. I used to dig a hole in the ground and stick my head down there and smoke cigarettes [lots of laughter]; looked like one of those animals, ostriches. That was funny.

*So you went outside in the back-*

In the main yard, yes. We were never allowed in the front yard. Oh, no. That's too easy to walk off - go bye bye.

*The back yard was all fenced?*

Oh, yes. It was all fenced in; it had spikes. I had a scar from it. And it had a low fence, that I went over. And then you ran through the orchard and there was another fence with spikes in them.

*There was a fence around the orchard as well?*

Oh, yes. There was. Is it still there?

Yes, there are still some fruit trees there.

Oh, wow.

*Describe the grounds to me.*

You went out the back door, went down to the bath and shower room, out the door and the first thing was the swimming pool. And then this big yard and the back part of the yard on the right hand side had the Virgin Mary statue there. That was all set up and the Virgin Mary was there and the little running brook. That was a real serene place.

*On the right side as you come out of the building?*

Yes. It was on the right side. You know that place pretty well.

*I'm trying to picture where that would be.*

Okay. When you come out the back door, you've got to come through the shower doors.

*Here's a map of what it looks like now. This is the front door. And here's the main building and here's where the school is now. This is where the swimming pool was and there's the pavilion.*

Mother Mary. I have to turn this around. Here's the front door of the Good Shepherd Center. Where's the swimming pool?

*Right there.*

Right there. And then you take the steps up, walk out. There's the swimming pool and to the right, walk around the yard. There's the fence, go around to the end of the fence and there's the Virgin Mother Mary.

*This is-*

There's the swimming pool. If you go off to the right of the swimming pool and you come out the door at the steps, go to the right and walk the yard and then you come up to the...down this way.

*So the orchard was over here. And the laundry was over here.*

Yes. The laundry was on this side and as you walk down the hall to the laundry room, you were outside. You went out the door, walked down the sidewalk and there was the laundry room.

*So the Mother Mary statue was around here in front of the-*

Yes.

*There might be a gazebo there now.*

The Mother Mary statue, when you walked out to the swimming pool and you went to the left and walked the yard around, to the end there was the Mother Mary statue right against the fence. Because that's where Dottie went over the rolled fence when

she ran. She got pretty cut up. And then you go past the Virgin Mary and you walk the rest of the yard and that's all yard here and the fence because it was in this area that we helped a girl over the fence. And we all lost our parlor for that one. Because we helped her go. And then you come back around to the swimming pool or the laundry room and back to the swimming pool. I can picture it.

*How did people run away? What time of day or night? Or all different?*

I ran away, my first day- I was in there about 3 or 4 hours. Barbara Cramer was there. I knew her from Sedro Woolley- still haven't found her yet. And I said, "I'm outta here, man." So she said "okay, let's go." So we went up to the 2nd floor, went through the window. The windows are only open this much because if you push them any further, the alarm went off. And boy did those alarms go off. We went down the stairs, over the fence, over the rolltop because that's when I ripped the hind end out of my dress. It was still hanging there when I came back. And I took off through the orchard and over that fence, ran for a block, couple of guys picked us up and then dropped us off. But some of us ran during the day, trustees walked out the front door, some ran during the night, some went off the 3rd story windows. Judy Smith, when she ran, she collected sheets from the bed and tied them to the toilet. They had worked on the bars there for awhile.

*There were bars on the windows?*

Oh, on all the windows.

*How did you get out through the bars?*

We just raised them up. The window that I went out-

*It wasn't on the frame? It was on the window?*

Yes. Because see, if you raised the windows so high, you could open them up this much-

*That's about less than a foot.*

But if you wanted to get higher, the alarms went off. You didn't want to raise the windows any higher because you knew the alarms would go off. We knew the marking there on the windows.

I watched alot of fights go on in that place. I watched a girl die. She had run away and when they got done with her, they had killed her and dropped her off in the yard of the Good Shepherd. That was the saddest thing, man, because she was a habitual runaway. And she was from Alaska. And they only had a woman's prison down there. And they didn't want to put her in there so they decided to send her to Seattle. And she just ran away. She was what they call a habitual runaway. She couldn't help it. But then this gang got ahold of her, raped her, shoved coke bottles up her and when they got done with her, they dumped her back in the Good Shepherd yard. We weren't supposed to see these things. We were not supposed to know these things. But things went on in that place that we did know about.

**SIDE B**

*Tell me about mass. Did you use that chapel?*

Mother John never made us participate in mass if we weren't Catholic. She didn't. That was one of the nice things there. But we did have to go to mass but if we weren't Catholic, we had to sit quietly and do our own Bible.

*On Sundays or daily?*

Sundays. And then when they had the other things, we went. She never required that any of us join in the mass if we weren't Catholic. And I never did.

*Did you have the same priest every week?*

He was a young priest. I remember him because of that young nun that liked him. We all knew they liked each other. He was a very young priest. And he was there. He lived there.

*He lived at the Good Shepherd Home?*

Yes. He had his own room off of the other side. The nuns didn't sleep on our side. They slept on the Superior side, where Mother Superior was.

*Where was that? The same floor but the other side?*

When you came in the building, I went left, but there were other doors to the right and those were the side for the nuns. That's where they ate, that's where they slept, that's where they did their Catholic thing, their masses and everything. When we ate, there was Mother John and some other nun, maybe Mother Serena, Mother Michael, Mother Sebastian, one of them that sat up on the stage, up on a platform while we ate our dinner and breakfast and lunch. But they didn't eat with us, no.

*How was the dining room set up?*

It had round tables. And the girls worked in the kitchen; they delivered the food. And we had like 15 minutes to eat a meal.

*So they served you?*

Yes. And if we wanted something from another table, we'd run over and ask them, "do you want to trade" or whatever. But we only had an allotment of time to eat.

*And then did you have to clear it or did the girls who worked-*

The girls that worked there in the kitchen cleared it. We had our own duties that we did, like I said, I was in the laundry room. I never worked in the kitchen, didn't want to be part of it, didn't like to cook.

*Did you get to choose your job when you came in? Or did they just assign you a chore?*

They assigned you a chore. But if you didn't like it or if you couldn't make it, a lot of girls couldn't work the laundry room because they couldn't handle the steam and it

was sweaty and hot in there. I liked it, personally, maybe it got some of my aggressions out.

*Was Mother John the Mother Superior?*

No. Mother John was on our side; she was the one who handled all the girls. But there was a Mother Superior. We called her Mother Superior. She told me once I wasn't an animal because I beat a girl up in there. I had 2 fights in there. And this one girl that I got in a fight with- I was standing there in line and Mother Superior was in line with us- I don't remember what we were doing- but this girl kept calling me dirty and ugly and I turned around and popped her. Said "that's enough." I'd had enough. And Mother Superior got real upset and says "you're not an animal. You are a human being. You will act like a human being." And I says "well, then make her act like one and I won't act like an animal." I was real mouthy. If I had something to say, I said it.

*There were nuns who lived there but didn't work with the girls?*

They all worked with the girls there but they had their own quarters. You'll find that in any Catholic thing. But they didn't eat with us. They interacted with us but when it came to their duties, whatever it is, they did it on the other side of the Home.

We did some pretty silly things in that place.

*Tell me about some of the antics that you participated in.*

The stuff we did?

Yes.

There was 283 girls one time there. And we decided it was time this girl's teddy bear died. So we took it out and gave it a full mass funeral, the whole kitten-caboodle. If we wanted to do something stupid like that one time that we all went to the fence and helped that girl run, we were all in on it because we didn't feel that she needed to stay there any longer. We just helped her over the fence. Mother John told us we'd lose our star and we didn't care. We didn't care because we would come together as a group there if we needed to. When we needed to help one another, defend one another, we would come together as a group. I always thought we did. And if there was some really bad bullies in there, which there were, we either stayed out of their way or we dealt with them. I wasn't afraid of anyone. I was stupid. Cause when you're not afraid of someone, that's stupidity. I didn't know that at the time. I just figured, I've always felt even as a child, I was just as good as everybody else or I always fought for that, I think, as a child. Because of my home.

I had one little girl in there, I think her name was Patty. Peewee was my best friend. Peewee. I think I gave you the wrong name last time but her name was Peewee. She was 4 foot even. That's exactly 4 foot even and 100 and something pounds. She was my best friend. Judy Smith was my best friend. That's all I remember being my best friends in there. And then that one girl, Patty, that used to follow me around. Man, she would clean my shoes, she would do anything I wanted her to and I don't know why.

*Did you look out for her?*

Kindof. Because she just kinda clung to me. So I kindof looked after her. And Peewee and I looked after each other. And Diane, that was another girl I knew in there, real well, Diane. She lives in Everett somewhere. I've seen her once when I was out at Good Shepherd. I went and saw her. Dee, that was her name. I went and saw her one time when I left Good Shepherd. But I've never really seen any of them except for like Barbara Cramer, Cathy Torsett- she's a nut case now. She was in there when I was in there. We're from Sedro Woolley, Cathy Torsett, Barbara Cramer and me were all from Sedro Woolley so we knew each other. Cathy was a rough one. She was a rough one.

*Do you remember what time of year you went to live there?*

No. I don't.

*But you remember swimming during the winter?*

Oh, yes. I think I went there in the summertime.

*And the pool was already there.*

Yes, the pool was already there. That was the most amazing thing I'd ever seen in my life. And I got out of there at midnight. Exactly. Mother John came and got me, got me out of bed and said I was leaving. I thought it was so odd at midnight. I didn't really care, I was ready to go.

*Did you have any preparation for being released?*

No. They just said pack your clothes. I didn't sign any papers.

*How did you feel about being released?*

I was glad. I was happy, man. You try being locked up for 3, 4 years of your life and you tell me how you'd feel. I had a boyfriend on the outside. He used to come and visit me at parlor because he lived with his family. Or we used to write letters to each other and he'd come and see me a couple of times. Beau, Beau Freeday. We got married. And then I left him after 5 months. I went and lived with my sister, Frances. That's who the courts placed me with, was my sister, Frances. And I ended up keeping house for her, taking care of her kids, taking care of her husband, sleeping with her husband- first man I'd ever slept with.

*Was that Wallace Prim?*

No, I wish. Andy Honor. He was my first lover. He was married to my sister. Today I regret it because I know I hurt her. At the time I didn't know any better. I just knew that she wasn't doing anything but stealing money from him, stealing his coins and not taking care of her kids, abusing her children and even now I don't understand what it was about. But I ended up taking care of the house, taking care of the kids, taking care of Andy. He'd come home from work and expect me to know what was what, if the mail was in. Then I ended up having an affair with him. But his mother even wanted Andy to divorce Frances and marry me, which I'm glad he never did. Because you don't start a relationship out that way. I did that once and only once in my life, never hurt anybody else again. I remember being glad to be out of there. Sometimes I think I should have stayed there.

*At the Good Shepherd Home?*

Yep. Graduated. Maybe I would have had a better chance in life. Sometimes I think I would have stayed there, I would have graduated and been more responsible. Maybe I would've gotten somewhere in my life. But I got out of there in a rush because I wanted to make up for all the freedom I had lost. That's what they told me in counseling because I always ran with younger people and then I ended up on Minnesota. Me and Beau did. And Andy and Frances did. Andy and Frances and Beau came back here and I stayed there. But we won't go into that.

*Let's go back to the Good Shepherd. Parlor was a big privilege. Were there other privileges that you had an opportunity to do if you earned stars. Were there some girls that didn't have family and there wasn't anyone who was visiting them?*

Yes, there were some girls whose families wouldn't come to see them. They had families. Everybody in there had families, just that....my dad never came and saw me. And my mother only came and saw me once when I was there. Frances came and saw me a couple of times. I think Frank and Dee came up there a few times, my older brother. But not alot. We went months, some of us went months without seeing family.

*So earning stars for parlor was not always....*

No. That was for parlor; that was to go outside and visit for a couple of hours or to have someone inside to visit for a couple of hours.

*But you had to have someone who was taking you out?*

Oh, yes. And you had to have made sure they were okay.

*So Mother John would check on that.*

Oh, yes.

*Were there other privileges besides parlor?*

No. I don't remember that. I don't remember other privileges. I remember that if we didn't have Christmas, they saw to it that we had Christmas. I remember that if it was Easter, they saw to it we had Easter. Because I remember my Christmases there were really unreal because I never had Christmas as a child. We couldn't afford it. So Christmas at Good Shepherd was a big thing to me because I had never had that before. And we got each other gifts, the girls that were friends, for each other.

*How did you get gifts?*

The family sent us money or if we earned money. There were some things where we could earn money if we did special chores, if we were trustees. I was never a trustee though. I think Mother John thought twice about that.

*Did you go shopping?*

With our family on parlor. We couldn't go outside the building by ourselves.

*Did the nuns ever take any girls on outings?*

Oh, no. Nuns in them days didn't do that. They were in full uniform and they stayed inside there. The only time I ever knew of nuns leaving there was if there was a business meeting or Mother John had to go to a special meeting or something. No. I don't remember Mother John or any of the nuns ever leaving. No. They never took us shopping or anything.

*You were there until 1963, you think? Were you aware of the Vatican II changes within the Catholic church at all?*

No.

*That didn't effect you?*

That didn't effect me. Didn't effect any of us. We were locked out. We were in a girls' home.

*And you didn't notice any changes in the nuns?*

No. I didn't. I didn't notice changes in nuns until I was out of there. And the first time I saw a nun on the street without a uniform just about blew my mind away. I thought, "oh, my." They have changed. We weren't allowed to see their hair. I snuck and saw Mother John's hair once. She'd taken her habit off and I just wanted to see. We heard stories about them being bald and cut up and all that stuff. I wanted to see. I don't even remember how I snuck it.

*She was sleeping on the other side?*

She slept on the 3rd floor dorm. I was next to her room for a long time.

*Tell me about the dormitories. Did you say there was a house mother?*

Yes.

*And she slept-*

On our side. But there was a nun that slept on our side too, on each floor, 1st floor, 2nd floor, 3rd floor, of the dormitories. And Mother John was on the 3rd floor because I slept right next to her door, because I woke her up screaming my head off one night, just literally sitting up in bed and screaming. And she came out the door and said "shut up, Vivian." And I said "no, not until you find out what that noise is." We thought it was a monster crawling across the wall at nighttime because that's what it sounded like on the outside of the wall. At about 2:00 every morning, this sound, I heard it, Vita Chapman heard it, all the girls heard it. Come to find out it was a new girl gritting her teeth.

But we had ghost stories in there. We used to scare those new girls coming in there - like the dead nun up on the 3rd floor in the coffin. We used to take the new girls up there and peep in and say, "see that coffin in there?" There was a box in there but it wasn't a coffin, I don't think. Maybe it was too a coffin, by god.

*That s on the same floor as your dormitory?*

No. That was the attic. There was one more floor up there, and that was the attic. We weren't ever supposed to go up there.

*Where was the chapel in relation to that?*

The chapel was on the other side. Let me think, yes, it was. The chapel was so beautiful. Those statues scared the heck out of me all the time. They were real frightening.

*Statues?*

Yes, of Christ. The Catholic statues. Of Jesus hanging on the cross. There was a big statue up there of him. And you'd look at him and he'd look like he was looking right at you. I was afraid of all those statues.

*What kinds of things did you hear about earlier years or Sacred Heart or...did you hear rumors when you first got there?*

Well, I told you last time there was this story about Sacred Heart, about....there were two twin sisters that were there. One was good, one was bad.

*When you were there or a story about the sisters?*

It was before I was there. There were twin sisters who had been there years ago. One was a good girl, one was a bad girl. But they ended up in Good Shepherd. Then it was either they ran away, because no matter what the bad sister did, the good sister went along with her because it was her sister. That's the story I heard. Anyway, they were out at Good Shepherd and they ended up getting in a car wreck, the bad sister did - and she died, actually in the act of sex was how they found them. And it had something to do with Sacred Heart because the good sister came back to Good Shepherd. Some really weird stories about that. It was.

They had the statue of the Sacred Heart up on the 3rd floor on the wall with Jesus and his heart. And it was called Sacred Heart. We heard a lot of things....and we made up a lot of things. We made up nuns being pregnant and having babies and burying them in the walls, dumb things. But that's not dumb, it's actually true. Years ago, years, years, years ago, nuns used to have babies, over in Italy and Rome in the old days. And they would kill them and they would bury them in the walls of the churches. When they dug some of those churches up, they found these things. I think the Catholics... when they became a nun, they married Christ. And I know that young priest and that young nun liked each other because we used to tease them about it all the time.

I know that after I left Good Shepherd I wanted to go back there.

*Why did you want to go back there?*

Because I didn't feel safe. I was safe at the Home of the Good Shepherd. I did not feel safe when I got out. It took me a long time to adjust being out of there. Nobody could hurt me, nobody could get at me, I was safe there. And they took good care of me and they showed me they loved me. That's where I learned about what caring and loving was about, was in there. I didn't know what that was about. My dad, I think he loved me in his own way, loved us; so did my mom. Well, I don't think our mom did. I think my mom hated us. She loved us but she hated us at the

same time. Our dad loved us but he just didn't know how to be a dad. He didn't know how to be a father. It's pretty hard to raise 10 kids, especially rebellious kids. But I often thought after I was out of the Home that I wanted to go back there. That was my security. It's a strange thing, huh? Get out of a place like that and you want to go back.

I visited that place once. I came back here from Minnesota and I went there and visited. I thought it was the strangest thing because they were allowed to have cats.

*You visited when there were still girls living there?*

Yes. When I was in the dormitories, we had like 15 to a dormitory on each side. My side, 15 and 15 on the other side. One time I was laying in bed and the girl across from me started screaming so we all sat up and said "what's the problem?" There was the white powder on the floor. And it was moving like a ghost. I know that sounds ridiculous but it wasn't. It wasn't ridiculous to me at the time. It was moving, this white powder was moving on the floor. I freaked, I freaked, I crawled into my bed and I stayed there and I would not come back out. And then I seen a knife fly across the room once. I wasn't the only one that saw it; other girls saw it. I often think that that place was haunted. I do.

There's alot of old history there and I can remember hearing stories about when that place was first built, how they used to punish the girls. They took them downstairs to the basement and sprayed them with fire hoses, like what you use with fire. When you go in the Good Shepherd, you have to get a complete physical. Oh, boy. That is a trip in itself. I had sores all over me from my dad trying to shoot me and they said it was nerves. And they put you in a tub of Lysol and they scrub you with a metal brush. And they scrubbed me until I was raw. And I was ready to kill that nun that did that to me. I had never in my life seen a doctor, ever been touched. They give you an exam and I freaked. I had never had a male doctor touch me and the dentist in that place tried to molest me. I still remember that. And I remember telling Mother John either she had to have somebody in that room with me or you were going to see a fight on your hands. Because I was never going back in there again, alone. He put his hand down my blouse. And I think he did that to alot of the girls. I think alot of the girls were sexually abused in there by people that come from the outside. Couldn't prove it but I think they were. Because he certainly attempted me. That house mother was an awful person; she was a terrible person. But Mother John never listened to reason, as far as the girls went. We were all wrong and all the adults were right.

I pierced my ears in there. I made sure she didn't catch me because I'd seen Mother John pick up a girl and throw her one time. Because she tried to pierce her ears. I got mad at Mother John and I pierced my ears and I put a tattoo on my body. She didn't like that.

*What did she do?*

I got disciplined. I lost alot of parlors over it. I made damn sure she didn't throw me down the hallway. I was not going to be thrown by Mother John and she was not little; she was not fat, she was not big but she knew how to handle us. But we were never beat or anything. It was a home to me. It became a daily routine, a daily life for me. And I was happy to be there after awhile. I loved it. They loved me; they showed it; they cared about me. No-one had ever done that before in my life. It was different. You have to come from what I came from to understand what I'm

saying. And the reason why I say it saved me is because I didn't grow up to be a prostitute or a drug addict. I was very naive. I still am in a lot of ways. And I try not to be because I work with kids today. I'm a volunteer advocate for CPS and I'm also a consumer advocate on the board of quality assurance for Skagit Mental Health. I do a lot of things and I do foster care. And I will fight for kids and I will fight for adults, parents. We have a rough world out here. It's very harsh, very cruel, very mean out here. Our children no longer respect and there's no discipline in most homes today. The children rule the parents. And that's the truth.

*Do you feel that's different than it was?*

Oh, yes. Oh, yes I do. Our system today is so backwards, it's so awful, the State, the system now- a kid at 12 years old can go into a doctor's office, a girl that has a tubal pregnancy- she has to sign a release in order for me to know. Or if your child goes in to do a UA, they have to sign a release if they want the parents to know. But yet we're responsible for these kids until they're 18 years old. The kids can walk out of the house and you can't do nothing about it. You have no rights. We have no rights over our children today. The State does, the system does. It's awful in our schools. It's terrible. I get so frustrated with the system. I'm trying to get together and do this thing that's called T-Top.....

*Do you have anything else you want to say about the Good Shepherd Home?*

No.

**END OF TRANSCRIPTION.**