

RED RAW

ONE WOMAN'S COURAGEOUS JOURNEY TO FREE HER VOICE

KAYLEEN GREAGEN-CASTLE



Copyright © 2018 Kayleen Greagen-Castle
All rights reserved worldwide.

This is a work of creative nonfiction. The events are portrayed to the best of my memory. While all the stories in this book are true, some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of the people involved.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced by any mechanical, photographic, or electronic process, or in the form of a phonographic or any other type of recording; nor may it be stored in a retrieval system, transmitted, or otherwise copied for public or private use – other than “fair use” as brief quotations embodied in articles or reviews – without prior written permission of the author.

For permissions:
Kayleen Greagen-Castle
hello@kayleensvoice.com
www.kayleensvoice.com
Published by K. Greagen-Castle
ISBN 978-0-6484066-1-7

Prologue

The long straight road stretched before me.

It was past midnight. The radio played quietly as I gripped the steering wheel tightly, my thoughts wild, body hot with tension as I replayed the events from the night.

There were very few cars on the road. Glancing in the rear vision mirror, in the dim lighting provided by the street lights I could just make out the shape of Tahlia sleeping soundly on the back seat.

Suddenly I was almost blinded by flashing red and blue lights behind me, reflecting in the car's mirrors. My heart thumped as adrenalin jump-started my veins. Panic overwhelmed me, and I fought for breath.

The police flashed their headlights, motioning me to pull over. I only had seconds to decide what to do. Put my foot down and make a run for it - or pull over and face the music.

I glanced at my daughter again and knew my decision had already been made.

Once they discovered who I was, I would be locked up again. My fate was sealed. All I could do now was make sure no matter what happened to me, Tahlia would not be raised in state care like I was.

Resigned, I pulled my car over to the side of the road. My heart tore in two. I looked back at Tahlia, doing my best to imprint her beautiful face in my brain.

I wore my fear on my face as I rolled down the window and handed over my licence. The officer asked why I was driving so late and I explained I was just on my way home from visiting a friend. He gave me a random breath test. Time slowed. He wandered back to his car and I thanked my stars I had decided not to drink.

They took such a long time, they were calling for backup, I knew it! I waited, knowing at any moment I would be surrounded by police pointing guns at me, just like they do in the movies. I held my breath as he walked back towards me.

This is it, I thought, ready to give in and hand myself over.

I was paralysed with shock, everything completely changed. How I wish this was simply a dream I could wake up from.

It would be another eighteen months before I could make sense of life again.



Chapter 1

At Risk

I was two weeks overcooked when I arrived earth-side in 1985, with a full head of bright orange-red hair. I joke I was a baby orangutan, skinny and hairy, as I recall the photo of me being bathed in the metal kitchen sink of the house across from the pub. My bright blue eyes, Greagen eyes and bright red hair (that I hated for as long as I can remember) became my most distinguishable features. In later years freckles developed, along with my chubby little cheeks, I looked like a Cabbage Patch doll.

Date of notification: 17-06-87 Time 1402

Section A. CHILD/REN SUBJECT OF NOTIFICATION

GREAGEN, KAYLEEN

Age in Years: 1 ½

Type of Abuse Reported: 5. At Risk

Previous Notification: No

Names [REDACTED]

Details of Notification:

17th June 1987, approximately some days before [REDACTED] had physically shaken 18-month-old child, Kayleen. Reported Kayleen constantly head bangs. [REDACTED] stated these problems were evident prior to Easter period – however cleared up. The child stayed with [REDACTED] in Port Augusta over Easter holidays and has since started behaviour again. Child considered at risk. Hospital has general concerns. Child looks generally sickly.

This was the first page I read in a stack three inches high, consisting solely of my childhood records with all names blanked out. At least another sixty documents were not included due to privacy laws.



In the rocky outback of South Australia, six hours north of Adelaide, rests a small opal mining town, Andamooka. Home. Both my desolation and salvation.

As you edge close to town, randomly spotted shades of white and brown mounds of dirt come into view. The speckled dots on the horizon, behind the mounds, are the few hundred houses, as haphazardly located as the mined hills of dirt. Some say it is a mystifying town. It was known

people had turned around and driven back the way they came before passing the welcome sign, spooked. Those familiar with the dirt roads, lack of street names (unless you count Government Road), and the absence of road signs or street lights, were part of the close-knit community.

Community made the town.

As an infant, the yellow house across the road from the pub was perfectly located as Mum tended the bar and often left me alone. It wasn't uncommon for people to pop in to ensure I was ok, or take me for the day or night, sometimes longer, depending on Mum's shift. The door was always unlocked. I don't think anyone locked their houses in those days, or took their keys out of the car ignition. It's just the way it was. Everyone looked out for one another.

My mum is one of seven children. Like Tazzie Devil, small and wild in both stature and build, with ever-changing styles of chestnut hair, from permed, to shoulder length, and sometimes completely shaved. She too had the piercing blue Greagen eyes and was quite attractive in her youth. She was no small presence.

A rare moment I felt close to Mum in a loving and comforted sense, was sitting on her lap as a small child. Stomach to stomach, my legs straddled her hips with my right ear against her chest. Her voice sounded garbled, like people talking under water. The background noise of the pub was blocked by total deafness in my left ear. For some reason, the sound of her voice in those moments was comforting.

Mum was a singer in a band with her brothers, Uncle Paddy and Uncle Gary. I was told her voice was lovely. Covering rock and roll songs from favourites The Eagles, Fleetwood Mac and Creedence, they were quite popular. I never heard her singing voice, substance abuse deprived her of tone. I did, however, know her angry voice very well. Regardless of the setting, her projection was extreme. Whether she was screaming at my face or at someone else, I could hear her voice anywhere. When she was in front of me, the pungent smell of beer on her breath was ingrained in my brain. Thirty plus years later, one whiff of West End Draught and I am taken back to my youth. The smell of beer, or the sound of Mum's voice, brings back memories, but mostly feelings. Feelings compiled from all the traumatic events to follow.

Testimonials

- △ "Since reading your book I feel like it's ok, that I'm not worthless."
- △ "You have helped me face my trauma, thank you for being such a damn inspiration."
- △ "The world needs more women like you, you're incredibly inspiring."
- △ "Reading your book made me realise I got on with life but never really freed myself."



Oh, My Heart

I wasn't always outspoken, but I know the destruction of keeping pain buried and the freedom of setting the truth free. I understand from personal experience how difficult it is to figure out who you are, why you are here, and how to find your voice.

I was incredibly confused about the truth of my life until my early 30's. I wished I could live a different life to the one that had been laid out for me. I wondered if my past defined my future. It made me question everything and everyone.

That's when I discovered my truth and how to use my **pain as my power.**

PURCHASE YOUR

Signed Copy 

@ WWW.KAYLEENSVOICE.COM



If you'd like to be the first to get:

- △ sneak peeks into my second book
- △ exclusive content
- △ giveaways
- △ tips on living an empowered life

Enter your email on my website



Find Your Voice

TURN YOUR PAIN INTO YOUR POWER