

Attached is several paragraphs I created for a novel I wrote called, "Was She Murdered? Jailed Girl Driver, 13, Hangs Self"

A novel based on a true story. My name is Marion Miles

"...Experience the treatment given to Indians when little was done to purge the wrongs done to the broken spirits of Natives living during a period of condoned racism and indifference."

*Seven-year old Fatty looks past a row of forty beds in the Girl's Dormitory at Arrowhead. She rolls a wet sleeve of her blouse further up her arm and grabs the wooden scrub brush from the soapy pail and splats it down on an already immaculate brown-tiled floor. Ten feet away from her is Lonely Bird bent down on knees and hands doing the same chore.*

*Lonely wipes her sweaty brow with a shirttail. She glances meanly back at Fatty and whispers in Shoshone. "I hate you! It's your fault we're soapin' up this here floor! One of them Paiutes snitched on us and told that old hag we were talkin' Shoshone, and I got your ten whacks to show for it." She turns her back and pulls down the shoulder part of her shirt, exposing the welts left from a razor strap. "Thanks! You witch!"*

*Fatty turns her head the other way, hiding a tear, "Sorry, Lonely. I keep forgetting."*

*Lonely says, "Quiet! Here come the school matron."*

*Fatty keeps her head down and continues scrubbing. A minute later a woman's black shoes stand close to the bucket Fatty's using. She can tell those shoes anywhere, the "Old Spider" they called her. She even smelled different from the other women working there. Fatty wondered if the woman ever washed.*

*Old Spider taps the pail with a stick she always carries, "Better hurry it up, Missy. Half-and-hour before dinner. Oh! That's right! You won't be having dinner tonight, Dearie. Your dinner will be spent lined up on your knees with your other little friends, and I will have the grand pleasure of wiping that smile off your pretty brown face with this here stick! Thought I forgot. Didn't you? You got your ten whacks comin' Honey, right after everyone's eaten." Ten minutes after the woman left, Fatty can still smell the woman's body odor. She holds her nose with both hands to shut out the smell. "Quawnuh!" [Shoshone meaning stinky!]*

*Lonely twists a damp rag over her wash pail and squeezes out the excess water. She looks both ways up and down the dormitory, checking to see if anyone can hear. She says, "Smells like twenty dead fish!" She coughs.*

*Fatty covers her mouth in embarrassment, and glee, hoping no one hears her giggle.*

At the kitchen table again, Zay says, "Auntie, where'd you learn to speak Paiute?"

Fatty says, "My classmates taught me, Honey. I talk it whenever I can. My ex was Paiute. My Paiute got better speakin' with him—most of the words are similar to Shoshone, like doe-suh, it's taw-suh in Paiute—things like that."

The girl says, "Hmmm, does Grandma speak it?"

Fatty says, "Your grandma couldn't handle the shame we were made to feel being Indian. I didn't care. They never 'broke my spirit.' I was always proud to be who I was. Probably the one reason your grandma neglected your mother so much. I think when she married Adolpho, she forgot about you kids. It used to bug me that you lived just a couple of blocks from Lonely Bird. She never had any time for you--always too busy earning money for that old fart. Stuck to him like glue. She should've been paying attention to what was happening to her daughter."

The event I wrote about was a true account told to me by my great aunt back in the early '60s. That type of treatment—forced assimilation by the dominant culture / staff of those working at the Stewart Indian school in Stewart, Nevada stole a sacred part of us Natives / fractured our thinking and crippled our souls interfering with a unique family dynamics which otherwise would have kept our psychic/ problem solving in balance—closing the door to spousal abuse alcoholism, incest and other negative occurrences which would have never taken place in a loving environment. Our reservation continues to suffer with 98 Percent alcohol and drug-related events ruining family life ad infinitum into our future generations.