



JUSTICE IN TIME

Families SA

Youth Justice

DELPHINE JAMET

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Delphine Jamet



www.deepintodark.com

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This book is 100% true and is based on a journal.
Most of the names in the stories have been changed
but locations remain the same.

It attempts to help you understand why and how
some girls end up in juvenile detention and on the streets.

Living on the streets can be very dangerous. Don't go there!
If you hate living at home, or you have trouble with your teachers, get help and talk to someone.

This book is in memory of Chelsea Lowry, Noongar Terry, Theo and all the people I once knew, more than
fingers I have to count. I will continue to write about the social issues that touched their hearts,

and I thank them for all the memories, both good and bad.

9.14 am

As strong as the wind
As vibrant as the ocean
The land so free
Is what means to me
A symbol of freedom
The pleasure of peace
I' m locked up tight
But one day I might
Taste the scent of happiness
Forever and for always
I' ll be there one day.

Hayley Nicole Stevenson

Sunday 14 May

The country is endless. Dry paddocks of nothingness line the landscape outside of the bus window. An occasional white shed peeks from behind bushes. We have passed two main types of scenery as the bus had driven along this everlasting route - the dry bushes with the pure Australian look, leaves all over the ground, the dry heat making it look like a dead man's land and the acres of endless yellow fields spreading out with trees sprinkled here and there and the hills remaining peaceful in the background. I'm on my way to Adelaide from Perth. Three hours and three minutes into it out of the thirty-seven or so hours.

My original plan was to stay one month in Adelaide, one month in Melbourne and then move to Queensland. I think I'll give Sydney a miss. The Olympic Games will rule the city, and it will take months to regain its normal living style, if ever. Millions of people will flock there from every corner of the world. You won't even be able to go to the local pub, it will be packed out!

Less than five days ago, I saw a friend called Jason. He said to me, "Come with us to the Gold Coast." I was shocked for a second but then told him I had too much for me here in Perth. He asked, "What exactly," and I wasn't quite sure how to answer that.

Thirty minutes later, we were making plans to move to the Gold Coast, Norfolk Island in particular, a tax free, no GST paradise. The reason for going was to make an escape. Well, sort of. Our friend Damien's daughter Jessie is thirteen years old. Well she might be his daughter, we're not really sure but he's not allowed to see her for some reason having to do with the authorities. Right now, she's dating a nineteen-year-old, and Damien is anxious to get her out of here as he doesn't like the situation she's in.

The other day, Jason went to the pub and walked over to Jessie to see if she was okay. The boyfriend, who is the same age as Jason, wouldn't allow him to talk to her. He sent three fifteen and sixteen-year-olds to fight him off with thick metal bars. Jason is pro in judo, karate, kickboxing and three other martial arts, but since these boys were younger than he was, he said he couldn't hit them without legal trouble, and he had nothing to defend himself with. He suffered six heavy blows to

his arms, fracturing his left one and covering both with bruises all the way past his elbow. All of this made Damien more suspicious that Jessie was in danger because Jessie's boyfriend wouldn't allow anyone near her and gave her little to no freedom. She wasn't even allowed to go the shops without his permission. Damien planned to intervene - and fast!

The plan was that Jessie would go to work and then when she returned early - when the boyfriend wouldn't be there - Damien would escort her, armed, to pick up her stuff from home. Me and Jason would be there for backup. Since I looked a little bit like Jessie, I would be sitting on the back of Jason's Kawasaki motorbike in case the police became involved - we would be a decoy to distract the police. We'd let them chase us, and this would allow the vehicle with the real Jessie to get away and help them make it safely to the airport. Damien would be armed because Jessie's boyfriend was a member of a bikie gang and known to frequently carry a gun. Damien had planned the situation out, thinking he was probably going to have to call the cops. The chances of a gun shootout, according to Damien, was fifty-fifty because we didn't know if the boyfriend worked or not, so it was possible he may be at home all day, and they did share the house with another person.

Once we had Jessie, we would take a flight to Melbourne that night and stay at a motel, either waiting there until the next night or continuing straight to the second part of the plan.

A lot of artillery (two handguns and a shotgun) had been arranged via two mobile phones by either Jason or Damien but I didn't know how they were getting them. Damien also wanted to take his ex-wife from the arms of her abusive and violent husband. For a long time, she had suffered the effects of his drinking. Damien would call her to the door and then leave with her without her husband knowing.

Jason would be waiting in the trees, ready to shoot (and kill) the husband if he attacked. He claimed to be a professional hit man, having killed up to fifty-six people since he was fifteen years old earning a minimum \$34,000 per hit. The police had confiscated his "blood money", he said, but there was no evidence of his killings - if they ever really existed.

Damien's mate was a federal police officer and was currently investigating Jason's criminal record in Queensland. The officer was also helping Damien to gain access to his daughter.

We would have to wear two pairs of clothing – because we might have to dump and maybe burn one set. It was mentioned at one point in time that I should have a small handgun. I quickly backed out of that one as I've only ever used a cap gun before!

After all this, we would leave immediately depart for the Gold Coast where we would stay for several days or, maybe a week, and then head off to Norfolk Island. Jason's grandfather, who treats him like a son, told Jason he had about \$300 million, so Jason was planning to ask for \$10 million to buy several houses on Norfolk Island as the houses are fairly cheap without tax (about \$100,000). The beach is more or less at the front door. Once at Norfolk Island, I would be trained to program computer systems and be given a new ID.

How could I possibly say no to this adventure? Jason picked up my replica pistol, which was really a cap gun and showed me everything I needed to know about handling a gun. He taught me how to carry and aim the gun and how to use it. He also told me what to do if one person was present or, if there was more than one person in the room, and to always keep a foot pivoted on the ground. Just this afternoon, he had taught me everything about carrying a knife and several self-defence moves.

Two days after our plan first took shape, Damien and Jason had broken their trust in each other. Jason was saying that Damien was a crook and paedophile – this didn't make sense to me because if Damien was a paedophile, why would he be working with a federal police officer? Jason wanted him out of the plans, which had changed from kidnapping Damien's daughter away from her controlling boyfriend to setting up some kind of mafia, all because he thought Damien was a paedophile and couldn't be trusted.

Jason also found out that Jessie was not Damien's daughter after all, and he suspected Damien already had already known this and was just taking us all for a ride. Me and Jason planned on going interstate for a while, just the two of us, but

after a while, I decided I didn't want to hang around a loser like Jason, who had a shaved head with a purple ponytail, bragged about killing fifty-six people, had put four cops in hospital (cutting both hands off one of them), was a bum, had no goal or life and a whole bunch of other reasons too numerous to list, including hating to take showers! So I managed to lose him.

So I haven't seen Jason in four days, and I'm on the bus to Adelaide. Damien ended up catching the same bus as me and I didn't see him as the bad guy that Jason made him out to be.

When I get to Adelaide, I'd like to study at TAFE and get my own place because I'd rather live organised than from a backpacker's place. It might be hard to get a job, though. That's if I like Adelaide anyway. I've been told it's a lot like Perth but maybe more of a classy city - a place of beautiful music and wine.

11.45 am

We've stopped at Yellowdine. There are flies everywhere, and in a few minutes, they'll be lucky to survive. They'll find themselves smeared all over the concrete if they don't watch their flight path. Everything's yellow here. Even the lazy dog nearby, who just wants some attention and a down-to-earth pat. Lucky . . . wandering around lazily, soaking up the hot sun, and he doesn't even get hassled by the local flies!

The scenery hasn't changed much. Still the same bushes and more flies than you can imagine! We are pretty close to Kalgoorlie and getting closer to the Nullabor. The trucks speed like demons around here. I doubt these roads have ever had any speed cameras, let alone police patrols.

Before we all got off the bus, the driver requested the person with smelly feet please put their shoes back on. I checked my socks, but they were okay. The driver was shaking Damien awake and asking him to put his shoes back on. He doesn't take many showers, let alone get haircuts, but he's a nice guy. Damien woke up and put his shoes on before turning around to tell me about Melbourne and what he was going to do. The first thing was to go to a particular welfare agency and ask for

money. I forgot the name of it. Apparently, they give out cash pretty easily - sometimes up to \$600. He said I should try the same if I wanted to get my own place, but I don't want to ask for any money since there are thousands of people out there who need it more than I do. Although it remains an option.

2.58 pm

Kalgoorlie looks pretty big. I always used to imagine it as a solitary town surrounded by flat deserts in the middle of nowhere. With windmills made of metal frames that you find all over the bush to collect the water, like they have in the movie *The Gods Must Be Crazy*, and the only people that live there were the miners and the families. But . . . there's more! A large community, a whole bunch of places waiting for you to spend your money and even a handful of persistent beggars. I was asking an Aboriginal man if he knew where Hinemoa Street was because my pen pal lived there. I had known her for about ten years and was just wondering how far she was from here. There's even a university in Kalgoorlie!

As it was Sunday, the lazy, laid-back atmosphere seemed to welcome everyone from near and far to a distant place that seemed simple but was more like a small city. In the distance, you could see tall mining cranes and fork-like towers. As you drive out of Kalgoorlie, there are massive piles of rock and dirt where the miners work. In the middle of nowhere, in the middle of the desert, you'd think it would be pretty hot, but a nice cool breeze settled the temperatures to comfortable warmth. I'd hate to be here at night, though. Alaska would probably be warmer!

The old Aboriginal man walked to the window of what appeared to be a tourist bureau. They had heaps of maps, but none that could tell me where the street was that I was looking for. He pointed in the direction it was in, and then in his quiet voice asked for \$1.80. A man with a family of two kids and a wife came out of the ice-cream shop and aggressively instructed me not to give him anything as the Aboriginal man begged there every day. The man continued to watch me as they reached their car and drove off. I felt bad. I try to give money to people whenever I can because I used to 'beg' too, so I gave him \$1.20, but I hate giving money to

grumpy people, especially when they don't say thank you, and they take it for granted.

We're back on the road. The all too familiar scenery of bush and red dirt are all back into view. Forever and eventually, they will lead us to our place of destination. Many of the travelers on this bus, like Damien, will continue their journey to Melbourne, but I, on the other hand, will explore city by city first.

5.36 pm

Nothing like a good tucker, even if I don't normally eat meat - besides chicken, and that doesn't count! Peas, corn, yellow rice, roast potatoes and pumpkin (or something in disguise) with roast beef and gravy on the menu in the 'pay per plate' meal. It might not sound like much, but it was big - as big as a truckie's belly! I also had chocolate cake and Sarsaparilla. This is an adventure trip, so I wanted to give my taste buds something new. If I had known it was nothing more than Grandma's cough medicine, I never would have bought it!

I'm on the bus right now, and I've got some Kool Fruits, apple crumble with yogurt and three small servings of jam – just in case I need a sugar burst in the middle of the night. The bananas in my bag will have to go down the slippery dip soon because when we pass the border to South Australia. We will be checked by the fruit quarantine people and forced to surrender our beloved fruit. A young lady on the bus told me they never get sniffer dogs (as the bus driver had stated) to sniff the fruit we were holding hostage. So I guess my three bananas are on the go!

They played the movie *Bogus* with Gerald Depardieu, Whoopie Goldberg and that gorgeous little kid from *The Sixth Sense*. He's so cute. I've seen it so many times, but I still like to watch it - *Bogus*, not *The Sixth Sense*!

Monday 15 May - 9.21 am

It's a nightmare trying to sleep on this bus, and it's most difficult trying to stay still when the bus bumps around a lot on the dirt road or when you have to squeeze

yourself into two seats to be able to sleep horizontally and your head keeps banging on the window or the walls and it's freezing cold . . . But I call it an adventure!

We had to surrender our fruit just before seven o'clock. I hadn't eaten my bananas, and I found a pear in my bag. The man also took our rubbish, so I forgave him for taking the fruit.

Breakfast was two pieces of raisin toast, stewed fruits and an orange juice. I am down to nine dollars, and I don't have much food. I'm not giving Damien any money. I can't afford to, otherwise I'm the one who suffers, not him. He said he boarded the bus with only 60c.

The Nullabor was pretty last night. It seemed to take forever to cross, but I slept through most of it. I'm not sure if the moon was full or not, but it was sure huge and bright. There were several stars sprinkled around, and they stayed with us for a long time although the scenery kept changing. They say you can see the stars the strongest in the desert since there are no city lights, and they are not wrong!

The scenery was pretty flat for a while with the occasional shrub or dry stick tree here and there. It was awesome! Seeing it was much better than sleeping, but if I stayed up all night, I would be exhausted in the morning. The lady who told me about the sniffer dogs for the fruit lent me one of her pillows. My sleeping bag was in the luggage compartment with my BMX. The bike is only half-built and ready to pack it in if I ride it too rough!

Tuesday 16 May

Today was my first real day in South Australia. It's so different here, and there's so much to get used to, starting with the traffic lights. You have a green man at the same time as the cars turn in your direction, and there are no warning signs about that. Why do they make things so complicated?

I went to Coles Supermarket – they're open from 12.01 am to 9 pm and are even open on Sundays! In Perth, they are open from 9 am to 5 pm six days a week.

Damien said they're open twenty-four hours in Melbourne, but I don't believe him. At the checkouts, they have digital computer screens with Fly Buy ads on the bottom that show the bill adding up as the prices are being scanned. The checkout operator uses a touch screen with a keyboard which seems so fragile! The supermarket was massive, too - probably double the ones you get in Perth - and it even had a café!

Adelaide has an interesting environment with fewer cultures than Perth, but a lot more people. There are double the suburbs here with about seven suburbs per sector marked on a map - about five or so streets per suburb. There are so many people living in the city. Perth doesn't have many apartment blocks in the city, let alone backpacker hostels.

I bought three newspapers today to find some apartments to rent. I started with a list of 30 and narrowed it down to eight. There is a great one in Kent Town - one bedroom, kitchen, lounge, carport and small backyard for \$95 per week, which sounds pretty good. I'm going to check it out at 12 tomorrow.

Wednesday 17 May

I went to check out the apartment at 12 pm and left the backpackers place, where I was staying, at around 11.30 am. I had brought my BMX bike over from Perth to travel with. I ended up in an industrial town and was told I was far away from Kent Town, so I tried heading back to the main road and turned right. Then I was told I was heading to Glenelg. I finally found Wakefield Street, but the numbers were going the wrong way, so I turned back and ended up at Victoria Square. I finally found a phone box and rang up the real estate agency, but the lady I needed was out of the office. They said to ring back in half an hour. It was now 12.20 pm so I returned to the backpacker's hostel to get my UBD, and then it was suddenly 1.03 pm. At first, I thought my watch was playing tricks on me. Then I thought maybe I went through some kind of time warp. Or maybe I had just checked my watch forty minutes ago.

Kent Town was beautiful and so was the location of the unit. A mixture of what you find in Cottesloe, Subiaco and The Hills. A set of wooden units painted in grey, green and white, surrounded by beautiful ivy-type trees, green gardens and a lot of trees everywhere. The ride was great, apart from the threat of my bike seizing up at any moment. There was a big road surrounded by large parks on either side like Kings Park in Perth. Beautiful. More lush and greener than any place in the world. It is such an awesome area!

I went to the phone box to ring the agent again, except I had now left the phone number back at the backpackers' hostel - I had taken off my jacket since it was getting so warm. I realised that I'd been wearing two long-sleeved shirts underneath my Adidas T-shirt and I'd just thought that the sun was getting a little warm.

I found the phone number in the phone book of a nearby pub. The real estate lady was a grumpy old witch - either that, or she was just pissed off with me. She said she'd already had two applicants who'd put their name down for the place, and she was planning to take them and couldn't be bothered showing me around. So I rocked up to the real estate agency anyway and just filled out an application form.

I had found the number 50, but there was a film and frame shop in its place. I asked someone nearby, and they pointed down the road to another place on the other side of the road. Strange that! Two 50 addresses on the one street. In Perth, odd numbers were on one side of the road and even numbers on the other.

So I filled out the application, and the old witch told me I pretty much had no chance of getting this place! I had no job, had only been in the state for two days, had no references or contact numbers, was too young, was late getting here, hadn't seen the place, didn't earn enough money on youth allowance and requested to rent for a period of six months instead of a year like the other tenants had opted for. But at least I tried!

I went to the café 20 metres down the road and bought the newspaper, a shepherd's pie and some hot chips covered in chicken salt. I called up for a marketing job that paid \$375-650 a week, which sounded pretty good to me. I found a great apartment in Adelaide for \$110 per week - two rooms, a lounge, a

spacious bedroom, a kitchen with a dining area, a backyard, carport - and all in the heart of the city. I rang it up, but it had been taken on Saturday, and today was Wednesday!

I got a job interview for the marketing job tomorrow at 1.00 pm.

Thursday 18 May

I rocked up to the job interview for the marketing position which turned out to be telemarketing for a mobile phone company. I walked up to the young male interviewer and gave him the street handshake to which he laughed, but then I realised I had been unprofessional so I shook his female colleague's hand formally. Neither looked a day older than nineteen. They liked my energy and told me to come back tomorrow to do a trial. I hope it's paid!

I went to a great bike shop in Rundle Mall, and they fixed up my flat tyre. They had some really nice new models in the shop, nothing as bad as my poverty-marked BMX but then I like restoring old frames.

Friday 19 May

I didn't go to the telemarketing job because I basically chickened out. I've always had a fear of that kind of thing, just as much as door knocking. So I went to the library to type on the computers and read both new and old editions of *The Advertiser*. I stayed there from 1.30 to 7.30 pm, and time flew by.

I returned to the backpacker's hostel armed with Hungry Jacks and donuts from Donut King and I pigged out on the top of my bunk bed. After dinner, I wrote until it was 12.10 am when I decided to go for a late night cruise through the city on my bike, an awesome remedy for being tired from the computer and writing for so long. Everything in the hostel was locked up, and my bike was in the garage of the backpacker's hostel, so I had to bring it through the inside and exit from the side. No one caught me!

I realised I'd forgotten my helmet, but I didn't worry about it. I expected it to be quite chilly for a May night, but there was only a cool breeze. I spent a few hours rolling around, jumping the kerbs and power sliding. The skate park was pretty impressive, and two or three of the riders were very good. I returned to Hindley Street from a small back street when I spotted some good action. One dark young man was literally kicked out of a gaming club. He was about average height but of solid build, and he retaliated, trying to stir up the bouncers. They were reacting with torrents of abuse and insults which ended with the dark guy punching, hitting and kicking the bouncers viciously. It was moving back and forth from the entrance of the club to the pavement and was really starting to heat up. Two of the bouncers tried to jump on him and bring him down to the concrete, but the man stood up with the weight of both of them and a vicious brawl erupted. He punched one of the bouncers in the face, smacking his head into a nearby pole and moving around with a great show of strength. Suddenly, one bouncer came running out of the club and attacked the young guy, elbowing him in the head. He jumped hard onto the patron's back and managed to drag him to the ground after yet another long struggle.

One guy in the group of onlookers started yelling and whistling down Hindley Street from where he was. After a minute, a male and female cop slowly walked up to them, acting as if they had all the time in the world. They walked around the poles and observed the two guards struggling to hold the patron down. Without helping the bouncers, they pulled out their notepads and began questioning the witnesses and the third bouncer. I rode off because I had no helmet or lights, and it was pretty late at night so I didn't want any trouble.

I thought about the future with what little money I had in my bank account. I had about \$150 remaining and I needed to find a source of money pretty quickly. I began riding from phone box to phone box, filling the money slots with flattened cigarette butts so I could return later with a wire and scoop out any jammed coins. I had to find another source of income as \$150 would not last long. As I did my last phone box, I noticed a bin next to it that was full, so I lit it on fire out of frustration.

I rode off to King William Street and watched. I thought it was funny, and it was such a release of my built-up frustration, so I lit another one ten metres away from where I was sitting. It burnt quickly, and I rode off about 100 metres to sit in the shadows. It took about seven minutes for the fire engine to come - I wasn't sure if they would or not. It was just a small bin, they're metal, so all it burns is the contents. In my view, it just saves the council workers from having to empty them.

I decided to head back to the backpacker's hostel and cut through the middle of the malls to see the action. Back in Perth, I was drunk every Friday and Saturday night and never bored, but it was different now that I was on the other side of the world without my street mates. Now that I was *not* drunk, what was I supposed to do?

I rode off towards the backpackers place, crossing the road, but twenty metres later, I was pulled over by an unmarked police car with two uniformed officers inside. They got out of the car and quickly asked me a heap of questions, like where I was going at this time of night, how old was I, what was my name, where had I been tonight, where I was twenty minutes ago and what I was doing around Rundle Mall. They made me get off my bike, put it down on the ground and empty my pockets onto the boot of the unmarked car. I refused all three. I was soon joined by two foot officers I'd seen running through the malls after I had lit the first bin on fire, and a marked patrol car. The police grabbed my bike and laid it down on the ground.

I hesitated, so they grabbed my shirt at the elbow and led me to the back of the car, giving me a countdown. I took a little bit out of my pocket, but it took three verbal pushes to make me get everything out. I had my keycard on the boot, which I grabbed back before they noticed so they couldn't get my name. They saw my key ring with the name Natalie on it and asked me if that was my name. I paused, and the officer thought it was, so I said yes.

One of the cops gave me back my possessions after he'd gone through everything - except for the backpacker's hostel key in case I did a runner. It was the only way I could get back to my bunk, and if I did a runner, I would also lose my \$20 bond!

They started talking on their walky talkies to confirm the identity of the arsonist. They told me it'd happened in Rundle Mall, but I said I hadn't been anywhere near

there and had just decided to pass through from the skate park. They knew I hadn't been in South Australia for very long, so they tried to trick me up with my words. I still had the lighter in the back pocket of my jeans but they didn't find it. The first set of police who stopped me pushed me around so that I was facing their car and did a pat search of me. Then after a few minutes of trying to figure out my name, one of the cops shouted, "She's a bloody sheila . . . grow some tits you stupid bitch!"

The walky talkie suddenly came alive from the person manning the cameras, giving information that unfortunately described me as the arsonist. Black baseball cap, blue Adidas shirt, blue jeans and a black BMX. So they decided to take me down to the cop shop while the first officers went to check out the surveillance tapes of the one shot they had of me. The cops in the marked patrol car sped off as well, leaving me with the two foot patrol officers, but I decided to start walking off. I was about ten metres away from them and could have easily bolted, but it was a difficult dilemma when they had my hostel key. The cop who didn't have my bike walked up to me with great speed and shoved me the other way whilst taking a strong grip on my shoulder and arm to the point that I could not move without doing some serious injury to myself. I think it was the pressure point that hurt the most!

Inside the small police station, they took me to a room which had a long bench, a nailed-down table and two chairs. I sat down on the bench as they closed the door for several minutes. Soon an officer returned to sit at the table to complete some forms, writing down the possessions I owned, so again I had to take everything out of my pockets. I had a texta on the table, so I grabbed it back when his head was bent down, and he asked me to return it without even looking! I ignored him and wrote a valid description of the officers I saw tonight onto the bench with the texta. The scratchy sound of the texta writing made his head snap up. He shoved his chair back with such force, walked around the table and grabbed my arm to twist it tight. The texta flew out of my grip onto the floor, and he ordered me to move to the end of the seat to see what I'd written, but I flatly refused. He told me one more time, and the look he gave me sent chills down my spine, so I complied and slid to the end of the seat.

Two cops entered the room, and he pointed out the graffiti to them. By that time, I had scratched the surface of the bench with a coin, several coins actually, as they continuously kept confiscating them as they found out what I was doing. I just hated sitting still, I wanted to get back on my bike, get drunk, find my Perth mates and just have some fun instead of sitting around in a small white box of a room with some tough authority figures.

My lighter was next to the skirting board on the floor with my foot on the other side of it, so they hadn't found it. But just before I was to be interviewed by a social worker, the female officer had seen it and told me to kick it out. When I refused, she stepped forward menacingly, so I kicked it out.

"Get a good grip on her, she's prone to escaping," said one officer to the other as we headed out of the station on Hindley Street. Fortunately, they didn't utilise the pressure point to its full potential, so I spun around to bolt once we were outside, but that only ended in me being slammed against the Coke vending machine outside the station doors. The second cop, who had been wheeling out my bike, dropped it on the pavement and bolted towards the back of the paddy wagon to open it. Then they both grabbed me and pushed me into the van, which was filthy and disgusting!

The watchhouse was located down a small alleyway with a turntable for cars that moved 270 degrees so the paddy wagon could drive in and drive back out.

Once inside, I was stripped of my baseball cap, earrings, pendant and shoes. The police already had most of my possessions. The reception police told a female cop nearby, who was drinking coffee from a mug, that they needed her assistance. She couldn't think why, so they said, "Isn't it obvious?" She looked at me then laughed, realising I was a girl. She searched me briefly outside the reception room then took me to a small adjoining room for fingerprints and a mug shot as an adorable young male in light blue overalls around the age of nineteen, joined us.

Then I found myself in the juvenile cells for thirty minutes. There was a bright light in the middle of the tall room. Two bench-bed frames were against the wall tracing the corner, one to my right had a fat white plastic - coated mattress, so I sat on it.

There was a metal bowl and sink on the opposite side. A motor carried on loudly, leaving no silence in the room.

When it was time to move to the detention centre, the lady cop came and unlocked my door as well as the door of my neighbour, who was a young Aboriginal girl a year younger than me. We went downstairs to rejoin the two police officers with the paddy wagon. The girl had been hanging out in the city too late when she was picked up by police. Her mum was supposed to pick her up from either Cooby Pedy or Port Adelaide but didn't have a car to drive down as the family car was one that was stolen and needed to have its plates changed and a bit of fixing up first. A taxi would have been way too expensive, especially as they didn't have much money, and the police couldn't be bothered to return her home. It was her first time in a cell, let alone a police van, so she was pretty nervous about the experience.

The paddy wagon drove up a hill which had an awesome view of the city, the suburbs and the night lights. The city looked so small, especially as they don't have anywhere as many tall sky scrapers as Perth.

Some fifteen minutes later, we were at juvie. The two officers were unhappy with me because they were now looking at two hours overtime, but surely they should be happy with the extra pay? On the way to the watchhouse, they had been driving erratically, especially around the corners, but on the way to juvie, they were a lot nicer. The seats were so low, but so was the roof, so I couldn't sit straight without hitting my head or straightening my legs.

We were escorted inside, one of the cops holding my arms for dear life. I had no shoes and was walking through puddles of water in my socks. It had only begun raining a few hours ago. The cops were angry because they realised that the both of us had left our shoes behind at the watchhouse, so they had to go and get them before we could be fully processed.

We sat down on a bench in reception as I overheard one of the cops tell the juvie staff that I had a tendency to escape. Outside reception was an undercover wooden path which led to the girls unit with the path on the right leading to the entrance we had come through.

I was taken to the bathroom, which had a bath, shower, two toilets and then another shower. I had to strip whilst a female worker shook my clothes as I took them off. She then gave me some soap, a towel and some thongs. I was instructed to never walk anywhere with bare feet, in case there was fungus on the carpet or bathroom tiles, and especially in the shower. The shower took forever to get the hot water running, so I took the time to soap myself down, goose bumps covering me from the cold the early morning brought. When I had finished, the female worker rubbed a mass of strong lice product through my hair which I washed off and then was made to rub all over my skin. Apparently, an open cut would cause a hellish stinging pain.

My pajamas were purple leggings and a thin cotton long-sleeved T-shirt, which I put on before I finally made my way into bed. The worker gave me a pillowcase and bed sheets as I was supposed to make up my bed. No room service here, folks. Five am, and I finally got some sleep!