

██████████ ██████████ - brother of ██████████

#### Early History.

██████████ was a qualified boiler maker/ did an apprenticeship and continued working for his original employer for around 12 years. He left this work after battling a few tough years particularly the winters with depression. He left work in 1992, his illness was never understood by his employer and some work colleagues including many friends who dropped by the wayside over the years, his illness was not understood. They could not cope with him. The stigma of a mental illness is still prevalent today. As a result of his bipolar which was diagnosed in his early 20's, (this was initially called Manic Depressive) He tended to always slip low and be very down in a depressive state, a cruel symptom of his illness. ██████████ craved company and did not want to be alone. Loneliness was a big battle for him. He always took his pills and weathered these low plateaus of his illness until his mood lifted and he felt well again. It could take quite a few weeks turnaround with medication changes to improve his state. We as a family my parents in particular, and myself with a young family were always there to support him. Sometimes he spent days at a time curled up in bed. He had good Psych Nurses visiting regularly back then, and they were based out of ██████████ Hospital and they checked regularly and cared for ██████████ and as a result he really respected them. (The structure of how they operated and were funded changed dramatically in later years and I know how this impacted on ██████████ health being supported.) A great GP also managed ██████████ earlier on and showed great understanding of his illness and showed ██████████ great respect too so they had a good relationship. This GP moved from the district in around 1994 and ██████████ lost a major support person. ██████████ did have some other GP's who he saw with his illness and he was managed well for some years. But going forward I do not think some had the training, insight or the time restraints to monitor and keep ██████████ on a more even keel. We had very limited support locally for mental health conditions particularly severe ones like bi-polar. To report to doctor's for blood tests and medication just does not happen when you are really unwell, Mum & Dad battled to get ██████████ to the doctor always driving him there themselves he struggled to get out of bed when down and when manic did not realise how sick he was so it was a struggle to get him there. ██████████ was not easy to manage sometimes over the years but we always looked out for him and had his back and supported him always.

██████████ obtained a disability support pension when he about 40 he was on this until he passed away.

██████████ had a house he had purchased not long before a short engagement to a woman who did not understand his illness. After this broke off he could not live there by himself, he sadly could not cope with his own company he suffered long periods of loneliness and only wished to get married and be happy. As a result of his illness ██████████ chose never to have children and pass it on, this really made all of us feel quite helpless.

██████████ tried working in other towns on big projects eg ██████████ ██████████ & ██████████ he could not cope with the long hours up to 12 hour days and the stress. These jobs all fell through and Mum and Dad would always need to collect him and get him back to doctors as he deteriorated into low pits of depression again feeling worthless. ██████████ moved back in with mum and dad for company but felt so lousy because he needed their support. This

support was never ending! They financially kept him for years until his death, because of his illness he was not sensible in handling money and his pension did not go far.

████████ managed his illness the best he could through his 20's, 30's and early 40's The older ██████████ got he had trouble with his medication which many bipolar suffers do, namely he felt wretched and drugged particularly, with shaking hands headaches and nauseousness. Many medications did not work well. When he was not compliant he would suffer more frequent and intense psychiatric episodes. It had been explained to Mum many years ago that each manic episode would be worse than the previous one, this is a toxic very sad side effect of this illness.

████████ worsening health was no doubt was triggered by my Dad's ██████████ diagnosis after a ██████████ and then passing away in March ██████████.

Over the last 7- 8 years of ██████████ life his condition worsened. He had at least 3 impatient visits. The last one of these he was in ██████████ for a fortnight – three weeks he was still unwell when he was released. (2012) He was put on an injection and a mental health order because he was not taking his tablets. My mum tried after a few months with Psych Services/Doctors but had to make an application to the ██████████ of Vic to have him taken off these injections as they made him very unwell and had nasty side effects. (I know this was extremely stressful for my mum especially at her age to have to go through all this. (This involved tele conferencing to the Board). We felt he was only on these injections for easy management, they did not help him get well in anyway. He was mostly stunned when was he was on them, his tongue kept going in and out and he could not stand still, his brain was trying to work with his body it was heartbreaking to watch we again felt helpless. (Last impatient visit details 2012, the following details relate to how he ended up in ██████████ as mentioned at the start of this paragraph). As I mentioned as a result one of these last episodes both my mother and myself tried to ask for help from Psych Services here in ██████████ and ██████████ GP we needed to get the police involved because Psych Services did not then do home visits, there was no way we could get ██████████ to visit them. ██████████ was angry with mum and was agitated the police insisted on an intervention order against ██████████ and we went through all the dreadful stress of a sick person being isolated from his main carer being my Mum. Mum never felt ██████████ would harm her and he never had. The police did what they thought they had to. ██████████ was hospitalised into ██████████ and when released still not well, ██████████ had to be moved into a Caravan at the Caravan Park while this order was in place he could not go home. Mum went back to court many months later to have this order removed. ██████████ in the mental state he was in, could never understand he could have no contact with my mum. This ordeal also did not help with any interaction with Psych Services ██████████ had going forward. ██████████ had always battled with presenting previously to Psych Services he felt they never listened to how he was feeling he was presented with paperwork with boxes to tick and how he was feeling. It was always very clinical and impersonal. I can support this with my dealings with them. They never seemed to listen to me but actually talked at me, when I would be trying to update them on ██████████ condition and our concerns for his health, asking for help I felt we were annoying them, it was a helpless situation.

████████ health was deteriorating from his birthday ██████████ (This was his 52nd). His mood was escalating he was keen on a women and had met a new group of people who he was socialising with, he was particularly happy, talking a lot and had many

big ideas but we could see he was becoming more manic as this month went on this, it was all happening so quickly. [REDACTED] had shaved off his beard after so many years and was unrecognizable to many. [REDACTED] had so much to do and so little time to do it, chronic symptoms of being manic and very sad to watch. Mum made contact with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and was told his file had been closed. She was then told he would need to present to their office for help. We question how files can be closed when someone has a serious mental illness.

On 21<sup>st</sup> Nov 2015 my mum rang after hours to [REDACTED] very worried about [REDACTED] and asking for help. (There is no afterhours psych support in [REDACTED] it is only a Monday- Friday support 9am – 5pm). Mum spoke to a triage nurse stating his mood was all over the place and he was doing silly things and she was concerned, she was told they could do nothing at the weekend up here in [REDACTED], the nurse stated it was also in their notes for [REDACTED] that Mum only contacted them when [REDACTED] was very unwell. We only called them when we were greatly concerned about [REDACTED] Mum was told to call the police, which she did not do, she was after some professional advice from the [REDACTED]

30<sup>th</sup> Nov. [REDACTED] mental state worse – tried to organize \$50,000 loan at Commonwealth Bank [REDACTED], fortunately the bank rang me to let me know. Early Dec 1<sup>st</sup> huge purchase of \$904 worth of lollies, Christmas cakes, chocolates magazines fishing bait etc at a local service station. There were numerous other large purchases at other retailers and later a taxi ride around the district totally \$476 that he could not pay. [REDACTED] returned to the bank to get money to pay this bill totally manic behaviour and not accepting the bank would not give him the money. The bank called the police who collected [REDACTED] and escorted him to Psych Services here in [REDACTED] knowing he needed professional help. [REDACTED] had also been in Coles being loud on this day they too had called the police recognizing that [REDACTED] needed help. (We only heard about these calls later), but Psych Services did not hold [REDACTED] for assessment but let him go for a walk to think about things. [REDACTED] never returned. All these huge purchases really showed his state of mind. I myself made a desperate call through the day to Psych Services and spoke to an [REDACTED] I explained all that [REDACTED] had done that day and he said to me there was nothing he could really do and it has been nice chatting to me. I will remember these words forever! Much later this day [REDACTED] turned up at mum's house demanding his purchases which had all been left in the bank, he got aggressive with mum and angry, mum called the police hoping to get him help. [REDACTED] disappeared on foot and after more demanding episodes at my place later that evening wanting his purchases, we were all getting extremely worried with how [REDACTED] was going to be picked up by the police and how the situation was going to turn out. He was wandering the streets hiding in the dark, manic, so tired and thin and looking absolutely dreadful his mind was muddled! He could not comprehend we were trying to help him. He needed to be admitted so many people could see he needed help. [REDACTED] was finally picked up by the police very late that night and delivered to the [REDACTED] where he was sedated for the night. My mum received a call the next morning from a nurse, to say an Ambulance was taking [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] I to [REDACTED] we were all so relieved he was finally getting help. [REDACTED] was wearing shorts and a summer singlet and had a big jacket. He had no money, credit cards wallet or mobile phone. They were all found up here days after he was missing. We are aware he left [REDACTED] not that long after he arrived, and he had not finished being assessed, he went in as a voluntary patient. Surely they could see how he was presenting manic and so unwell. He went to Centrelink to get a health card and the

Commonwealth Bank to get money (only \$20 in his account) both in [REDACTED]. He returned to [REDACTED] and around 3pm that day got out of the ward again through a locked door. My mum received a call from [REDACTED] at 5pm that day to say when [REDACTED] had left and that he had not returned to the ward. The ward notified the [REDACTED] police and we heard nothing more from [REDACTED]. I rang on Dec 3 asking to speak to the head of the psych services in [REDACTED]. I spoke to a [REDACTED] asking how could this happen? I was told [REDACTED] was a voluntary patient and she was very sorry. [REDACTED] would have presented to this ward looking very unwell, he was thin, highly agitated but very lost at the same time and had a severe cough we knew he had a bad cold/chest infection and had not slept properly for weeks he was running on empty. We never heard from [REDACTED] again, we were so worried because we always knew no matter how mad [REDACTED] was with us he always told us just that. In previous times we always received his unhappy calls from the ward angry at us for being there and that we did not understand him, we knew this was just where his state of mind was at the time and in time he would be well again. But this time we heard nothing it was so different, we waited and waited for the phone to ring but nothing came. On Sat 5<sup>th</sup> Dec my younger brother and I went to the [REDACTED] Police station so worried about [REDACTED] and to report it was highly abnormal we had not heard a word from him. The following morning I received a very early call from [REDACTED] police notifying me [REDACTED] was listed as a missing person. This was more than four days since he had left [REDACTED] we were all in shock. There were sightings of [REDACTED] with his [REDACTED] hair and [REDACTED] beard, which we knew he did not have anymore. As I mentioned his beard was gone and he had been going bald with [REDACTED] hair, definitely had not been [REDACTED] for a long time! We found these sightings hard to believe. Another week went by and a deceased body had been found that they could not identify. My mum was contacted by [REDACTED] to give a DNA sample to be used to identify [REDACTED] our hope had been lost and our lives had been changed for ever. We question still nearly 3 and half years on how this could have happened and why we as a family were not taken seriously with our concerns. [REDACTED] perished in the elements, we had really cold nights when he disappeared, in his muddled mind he thought everyone was after him he was so sick. He only had a singlet and shorts on when he left [REDACTED] no money no food, nothing. He had no friends in [REDACTED] to call on. His warm coat was back in the Ward, which we collected at a later date. My mum received a call from [REDACTED] Psych Services to come down and discuss the situation, we were grieving and in shock and there was no way this was ever going to happen. We received a sympathy card and that was all. They never offered to come up and see us. Due to it being referred to the coroner they would have been being very careful with their actions. Even while [REDACTED] was missing my mum received a call from his GP here in [REDACTED] asking for [REDACTED] and that he had missed an appointment, he did not even know [REDACTED] was missing! We waited [REDACTED] for the coroner to finish his finding and still now we have no closure. We feel [REDACTED] being so unwell was so badly let down by a system that should have protected him. Where was duty of care for a vulnerable sick person with a history of mental illness. My mother who is now 81 and been [REDACTED] primary carer for so many years has aged so much.

We are so appreciative of the care and compassion shown to [REDACTED] and our family by the Hamilton police over many years they really did try to help all of us.

My mother had been a member of a carer's group for many years for which she had been so thankful. Sage Hill carer's group in Warrnambool was a particularly great support to her with

trained psych nurses working there who supported my mum and dad and knew [REDACTED] well too. They could always call on them for advice when times were tough with [REDACTED]. They supported the carers. This no longer exists today, another organisation Wellway's has formed, my mum has had nothing to do with this one.

[REDACTED] only saw a psychiatrist when he was in [REDACTED] or released after a manic episode and some follow up appointments may be made for up here. Otherwise it was up to the clinical staff at Psych Services conferring with the psychiatrist if [REDACTED] should see him. [REDACTED] also did not keep some of these appointments he felt he got nowhere with them. The relationship was not good. Obviously when he was put on the injections this Psychiatrist was involved. This Psychiatrist was through the Psych [REDACTED] at the [REDACTED] hospital. [REDACTED] had no faith in this person. If [REDACTED] had been able to afford the services of a private psychiatrist both my mum and I have wondered since his passing how better his illness may have been managed. The closest private psychiatrist in [REDACTED] was not taking any new patients when mum had inquired many years ago.

This story of my brother's battle with his illness may seem like a nightmare to many but it was so very real to us we lived it every day with him. To this day we are shocked that it ended so tragically.