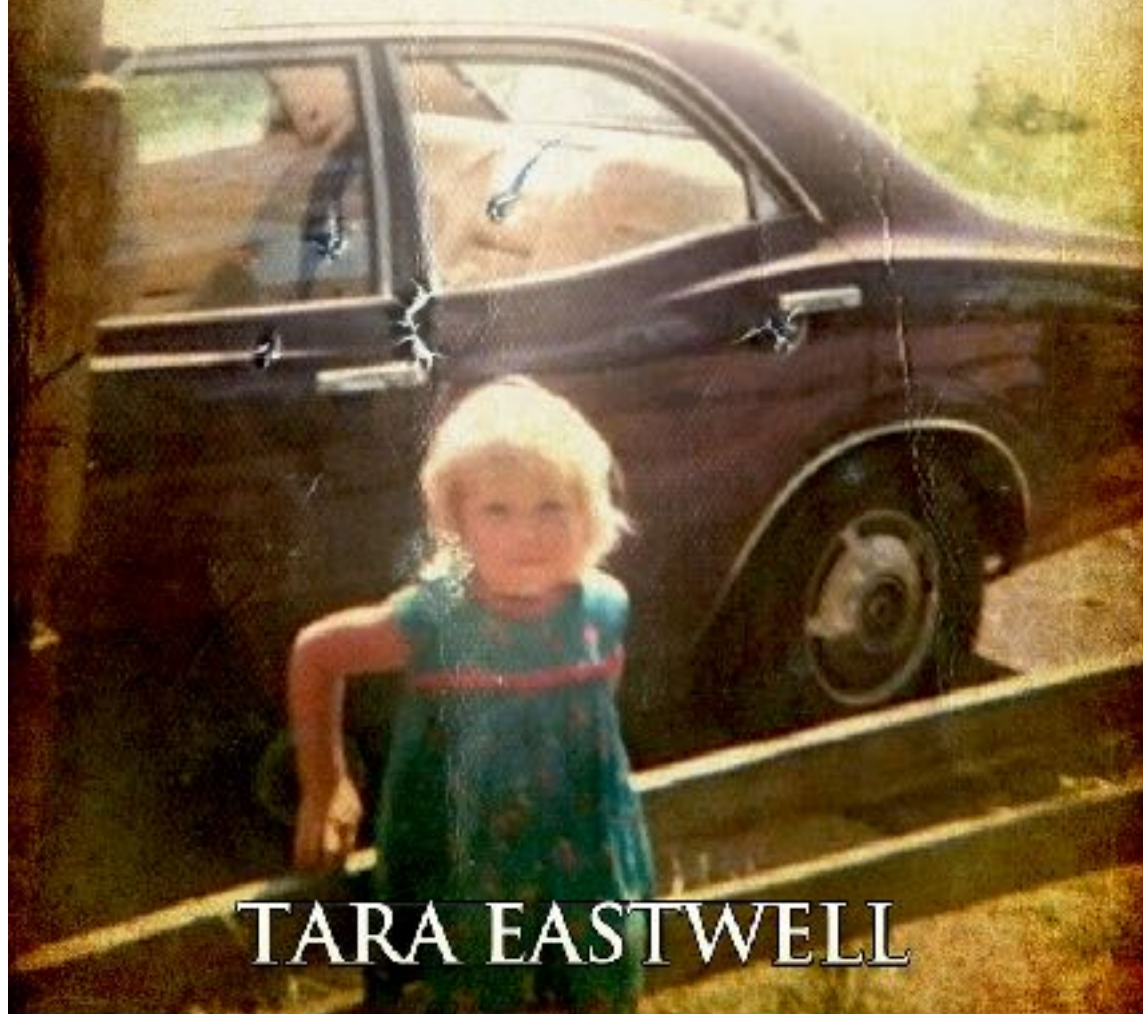


THE  
**FORD  
CORTINA**



TARA EASTWELL

## The Ford Cortina

They owned a brown Ford Cortina, born out of the 1970 - 80's, priding as a typical middle class family sedan. My sister, two and a half years younger, along with a few cousins, all younger than myself, were piled into the car as he drove us around the streets of North Dapto, where in those days seat belts and lax road rules dominated any responsibility.

He drove past their local corner store where I secretly hoped he would visit. This shop, alongside the hairdressers and butchers was brimming with every plastic screw top jar, housing every lolly and chocolate that ever existed. It was a kids smorgasbord of treats and I loved it. There was a cold meat deli for sandwiches, ever so generous cut potatoes for hot chips and old fashioned potato scallops wrapped in newspaper with lots of salt, chicken cackles with the jokes spread over the small green packet for 10c, giant sized packets of chickadees, flavoured milks, throw downs (and other fire crackers), bottles of the creamiest milk that I didn't dare let slip through the bag on my journey back to his house.

This same trodden path I walked upon hundreds of times as I fetched a list of items hand written on a note cradling the money tucked safely inside the carry bag. I was the eldest grandchild of course so responsibility was my thing. I didn't mind at all. That walk became my escape, my sacred sanctuary of rest as I set off free from it all.

The trip on foot to this shop was no more than one kilometre from their house. I was around six or seven years old in a time where society was deemed safe to roam at that age and protection from crazy people only existed in a far away land of inbreds and characters replicating the cast of Deliverance!

I used to save my change and bury it with a spade at the side of their house. It became my very own treasure chest unknown to anyone else. Ironically, it became the house of many secrets.

Perched upon his lap feeling like a prize winning princess I gently placed my fingers loosely on the steering wheel. Not daring to do the wrong thing I sat still and revelled in the buzz while he impressed his little herd as he continued to drive the streets telling us story after story about anything and everything little kids wanted to hear. He was a grown up hero in our infantile vulnerable minds (well for the others anyway), and in this moment lost in the joy of this special outing.

'Look kids, no hands, he gloated!' All of us in awe of his skill and playful antics, cheering him on and loving the rebellious driving, so much so it took a little while to feel the bulge in his pants. Trying to relish in the excitement of our car ride and the thrill of the outing but an unsettling urge to flee crept over me! I could barely make a smile as the others were unable to hide theirs! He anchored the steering wheel with each of his knees to free his arms as to elevate my body in a bobbing motion so naturally mistaken as a bumpy car ride.

The chosen child, the favourite, the apple in his eye, the special one, the first that came along, the six or seven year old serving the urges of this sexually crazed man. Perhaps I was the butter to his bread, the prey to an under nourished lion, the juices for his thirst. The first untouched infantile vagina he could get his hands on? One will never know what compelled him to do what he did!

The joyous shrieks of the kids added to his own elation, separate to the innocent world going on in the back seat. He drove the car while I rode his penis. It was all too easy to manipulate what he was really doing to me. He thrust in a frenzied motion until his selfish and sickly excursion was over.

I cannot tell you the precise age I was the very first time he did this to me? I know I was around four and possibly even three. One day it was just a part of me. I was now a vital part of his schedule and an unwanted reality of mine. I became the little girl at the sexual mercy of an old man, over and over and over! It was a succession of rapes and they occurred so frequently it became the unwanted attention I began to expect.

My body wasn't all mine anymore. On lend for a time I should get used to. Not dissimilar to the female prostitute loaning her body in support of her drug habit or university degree, displaying an embellished figure cast aside from protection with the under estimated strength in her mind to be fucked by someone free from love and comfort.

He was a large man, over six feet, with proportionate broad shoulders, pale toned skin and donning lack lustre salt and pepper hair that had no originality except for a typical side part. Occasionally he had stubble and the odd beard. His mouth, a wiry lipless pout, especially indicative of his kissing position.

At first he was so gentle, so convincing of his actions with a distinct culmination of twisted truths for which I, over time, became part of. He controlled my entire world, had me for breakfast, lunch and dinner and threw me deep into a contrived brainwashed junk pile. I was the special girl chosen to be the one to satisfy his sexual vulgarity, the one to honour his secret life.

I wholeheartedly became his secret life and he became mine!

Crying myself to sleep became a customary tradition. At first my tears were the leaking evidence of my sadness, my loneliness and my terror. Then it became a contrived mission to measure my sadness by how soaked my pillowcase became. Most nights my quiet private sobbing would saturate one entire side of my pillow. Those nights bore a vulnerable little girl I could not rescue living day and night with such despair and disgust.

This feeling grew from days to months to years.

My little self carried a confused and disorganised mind battling for a breath while trying to decipher what on earth was happening to me. Was it normal? Were my friends living like this? Was it a nightmare? Do I talk about it? Was I pregnant? Why am I having nightmares? Why am I so physically sick all the time? It was as clear as a mathematical genius trying to explain the symmetry of proportion to a five year old!

From the Ford Cortina, to the shed, to the lounge room, to the kitchen, to his bedroom or to any public outdoor space...he raped me. If he could pull it off (pardon the pun) then he would. He took risks. He was bold.

This one time when I was around six he led me to his shed, a large timber structure with different partitions for different outdoor uses. The cordoned off area was often frequented and would become part of his 'go to' place when others were occupying more than one room in the house! I was quite sunburnt on this particular day so what more masterful brain wave then to take me to his shed. He finds some baby oil and some drops of something I cannot recall and gives me a running commentary of his potion while he rubs it on my sunburnt shoulders. He tells me to take my shirt off.

At this point my mind kicks into self survival with forecasting another exploration of my vagina. My mind elevates beyond the now, inviting thoughts to distract from the action but my legs weaken so rapidly, almost reminiscent to a physically starved child walking slowly beneath the desert sun desperate to fill her dry mouth with a full bosom of milk, except her Mama is slumped against a skeletal tree yearning to quench her own thirst. She cannot help her child. The small child relies upon all but of herself. The feeling like this child and I are friends keeps me going.

The baby oil finds its way inside me. The sunburnt areas are forgotten but tendered to no less and the quest for climax is thrust high on his agenda. As his large fingers penetrate my vagina, my tiny hand and arm bearing strength of a six year old, is encouraged without choice to perform the impossible. He urges me to go faster but the burn in my arm is intolerable and my fear is duplicated into a world of darkness. I'm going to faint. He realises, removes his fingers from inside me, sucks them like an entree of sticky chicken and forces my head to his penis when he thinks I'm good to go! I finish him off. He cleans himself up with his array of implements for such matters and leaves the shed, but not before a barrage of words telling of the fable if one should ask?

I am six fucking years of age!

I walk back inside as the magic potion soaks into my shoulders. I carry on as I always do. With a smile on my face and as well balanced as I can muster. The world carries on in a way I begin to predict with my mind striking into an action of normality whilst leaving my heart behind. I begin to forget myself as real and forge ahead with emotions too unbearable to feel. In an obscure way my feelings of love and fear and everything in between begin a life of dormancy for which will turn into an unpredictable period of time?

I tell myself I'm better off dead but I don't really know what that means or how to do it?