

# Hidden camera revealed the horror Lee-Anne couldn't tell her parents

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**Rob and Lorraine Mackey with their daughter Lee-Anne. Photo: 60 Minutes**

When Lee-Anne Mackey began screaming in pain, her mother and father did what any parent would – they began asking questions.

Rob and Lorraine Mackey's daughter has a profound disability and is extremely vulnerable. The 53-year-old Melbourne woman has cerebral palsy, uses a wheelchair and is non-verbal. Lee-Anne uses her eyes to communicate, gazing at pictures on what is known as an e-tran board to convey her thoughts. Left for "yes", right for "no".

She complained of rough treatment at the Scope-run residential house where she had lived independently with other clients for more than two decades. A scan revealed historic fractures, and it was feared that rough lifting might have been injuring Lee-Anne, who had early onset of osteoporosis.

So Rob and Lorraine put up signs saying: "TO ALL STAFF, PLEASE DON'T PULL ME AROUND BY MY ARMS AND LEGS BECAUSE IT HURTS ME." But things did not improve. Lee-Anne spent six months sleeping in a wheelchair because of the pain she was in.

The Mackeys kept complaining to Scope, which initially rejected any mistreatment after it ordered an investigation into the complaint in 2019. It was then that the Mackeys took matters

into their own hands, placing a covert camera in their daughter's room despite not knowing if it was legal.

What the camera captured horrified them. It revealed multiple incidents of bullying, vile behaviour and physical abuse.

A *60 Minutes* investigation has obtained footage of the treatment meted out to Lee-Anne over 18 months in 2019 and 2020.

The videos reveal that the complaints made by Lee-Anne, who is not cognitively impaired, only worsened the behaviour of her carers, Lisa Wilson, Monika Paniczko and Anastasia Moutsos.

The camera captured Wilson, then aged 25, sticking her finger and then a cylinder into Lee-Anne's mouth for her own amusement and yelling, "Aw, she hasn't got a gag reflex."

In another video, Paniczko, who had worked with Lee-Anne for 17 years, can be seen listening to a broadcast about health workers dying from coronavirus.

Paniczko says: "Maybe I have corona ... if I have it, I want you to have it." She then leans over Lee-Anne's face and appears to breathe and spit into her mouth. "There you go ... we both have it," she tells Lee-Anne.

NDIS Minister Bill Shorten has vowed to try to place life bans on the disgraced disability support workers from working with vulnerable people under the scheme.

Shorten, who was provided the footage by *60 Minutes*, said the actions of the carers were dehumanising and made him angry. He said Scope, a large not-for-profit provider of disability services in Victoria and NSW, would be watched.

"I thought it was just evil," Shorten said. "I don't want to believe that there are people who will treat other people in the manner in which I saw in that video.

"These people acting with such callous indifference to Lee-Anne, it's just shocking. It's cruel. It's a betrayal of Lee-Anne and it's actually a betrayal of the good people who work in disability. It was shocking.

"I've reached out to Robert and Lorraine, Lee-Anne's parents."

In October 2020, Scope reported the abuse to Victoria Police after being handed the CCTV files by the Mackeys. Wilson was immediately sacked, but Scope chose to move the other two carers, Paniczko and Moutsos, to another residential house. They were both dismissed six months later when police laid charges.

All three women initially pleaded guilty at the Broadmeadows Magistrates' Court in June 2022 to assault.

Wilson's defence was that her actions were intended as a joke. After convictions were initially recorded against the trio, they launched appeals in the County Court.

In separate appeals, Moutsos and Wilson pleaded guilty to assault but argued successfully for convictions not to be recorded.

Paniczko convinced an appeal court to withdraw her guilty plea and drop one of the charges against her. For the remaining charge, she entered a diversion program, meaning that if she acknowledges responsibility and completes certain conditions, no finding of guilt will be made against her.

Paniczko's conditions included giving a verbal and written apology to Lee-Anne and donating \$500 to the Lort Smith Animal Hospital.

Wilson, considered the ring leader, was ordered to perform 175 hours of unpaid community work, and Moutsos was ordered to perform 80 hours.

A County Court judge ruled that the video evidence secretly recorded by the Mackeys was admissible during Paniczko's appeal.

Wilson was banned by the NDIS Commission for five years, while Paniczko and Moutsos received three-year bans.

Victoria Police Detective Senior Constable Travis Kinghorn, who investigated the case, urged people to report abuse in the disability sector.

"There's no excuse for this type of behaviour," he said.

The Mackeys said the ordeal had been traumatic and left Lee-Anne with psychological scarring.

"[It] breaks my heart to see that she's lost so much trust in people that care for her because she'd known them for so long," Lorraine said. "She does see a psychologist and her trust levels have gone to zero since ... these incidents."

Lee-Anne remains a client of Scope and now lives in another of its houses. Scope acting CEO Lisa Evans, who was not in charge at the time of the offending, said she was appalled by the conduct. She has met the Mackeys to apologise.

"The videos are some of the worst things I've ever seen," she said. "It is appalling ... It cuts right to the core of who we are as people."