

Sobs and Songs from the '*Inconvenient Child*'

Hear Sharyn Killens and Lindsay Lewis Tell This Extraordinary Story

The Inconvenient Child, a compelling new book, reveals the shocking true story of a secret Australian child's struggle to survive childhood and find her African American family, after a search spanning two continents and 48 years.

Sharyn Killens is better known as Sharyn Crystal, a successful Australian singer and entertainer. But her life wasn't always glamorous and her childhood was at times, a living hell. *The Inconvenient Child* is the true account of her extraordinary journey to success and her quest to discover her identity.

Sharyn Killens and author Lindsay Lewis have been friends for twenty years and met during their time as entertainers. Their close relationship and music background makes for a lively yet emotional author talk, keeping their audience enthralled as they recount Sharyn's extraordinary story and her often difficult journey through life, so keep the tissues handy. But it's not all tears and there is often a surprise at the end when they break into song!



"This is not your usual celebrity biography," says author Lindsay Lewis. "It is a gritty, honest and confronting account of an abandoned Australian black child's struggle to survive in an often hostile white society."

Born in 1948, Killens was the product of an unacceptable liaison between a blue-eyed blond Sydney girl and a visiting African American serviceman. In 1950, baby Sharyn was rescued from squalid foster care by visiting champion African American boxer Freddie Dawson and taken to live in a 'party house' in the red light district of Kings Cross. But her absent, elegant mother then abandoned her in a convent-orphanage at age five, where she suffered abuse at the hands of a cruel nun.

At fifteen, after clashes over her father's undisclosed identity, the troubled runaway teenager was arrested in Kings Cross. Sharyn had committed no crime but the Courts deemed her 'uncontrollable' and in 1964, she was sentenced to notorious juvenile detention centres of Parramatta Girls Home then Hay Girls Institution, where she was stripped of her dignity and programmed into submission.

Sharyn's solace was her love of music but how could she realise her dream of becoming a singer if by twenty-four, she was still caught up in the Kings Cross lifestyle as an exotic dancer?

Through courage and perseverance, she achieved her singing dream as **Sharyn Crystal** but her problematical relationship with her aloof mother was exacerbated by the other secret her mother kept for forty years; the identity of Sharyn's African American father.

When that secret was finally revealed, determined to find him, Sharyn set out in search of her roots; a quest taking her eight years and a journey across the world, first to New York then Los Angeles and eventually to America's Deep South. How she gets there and what she discovers en route makes for riveting reading.

Sharyn's story is not all heartbreak and misery. It's also a story of triumph, faith, success and joy.

**Hear Sharyn and Lindsay tell this extraordinary story at
your Library or Book Store**

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