The Early Life of Ray Tibbetts  
Clemency Presentation

Life at Home

On June 8, 1957, Ray was born to Deanna and Stanley Tibbetts.

By 1958, the Tibbetts had five children under the age of ten: Suzanne, Rick, Archie, Ray and Willie.

Life at home was traumatic and chaotic.

Both parents were abusive, alcoholics, and struggled to provide basic care for their children.

With their parents absent from the home, Suzanne was forced to care for the younger boys even though she was just a child herself.

In July 1959, Children’s Services removed all of the Tibbetts children from their parents' home and placed them in the foster care system.
Living at the Merrimans

Children’s Services first placed the children with the Merrimans.

Children's Services noted the unsatisfactory conditions at the Merrimans as early as October 1960.

The State failed to take any corrective action or remove the children.

In addition to fostering the five Tibbetts children, the Merrimans also had four biological children living in the home at the same time.

Despite continued documentation of abuse in the Merriman's home, Children’s Services still failed to take any action to protect or remove the children.
In May 1961, Ms. Tibbetts brought Suzanne and Rick home under agency supervision.

Claiming lack of financial resources, Ms. Tibbetts left the three younger boys with the Merrimans.

When Suzanne and Rick were taken back home, the three youngest boys - Archie, Ray and Willie - were forced to stay at the Merrimans.

Suzanne and Rick told their mother about the abuse at the Merrimans, but again, Children's Services took no action to remove the boys.

After Willie was severely burned, the State finally removed the three boys from the Merrimans in November 1961.
Living at the Oswalds

Children Services then placed Ray and Willie with the Oswalds where they lived with at least five other foster children and the Oswald's five biological children.

Archie briefly returned to his mother's home but was quickly separated from the family and placed in various other foster homes.

Hamilton County Children's Services Record, p. 25

In the late 1960's and 1970's, 2020 was a juvenile detention center used to house delinquent youth in a high security setting.

Hamilton County Children's Services Record, p. 63

Children's Services attempted to reconnect the boys with their parents for years with no success.

Hamilton County Children's Services Record, p. 52, 53, 57
she really doesn't want them.

his parents have not been able to show any interest in him, and his aunt and uncle. He feels that he lives in the shadow of the above mention live as virtual orphans the Oswald household.

7-15-70 - Ray and Willie received their first letter from their mother in over 9 years. Willie has already written back to her. Mr. Tibbetts called today and says he is interested in contacting the boys. We will wait to see what happens.

Oswald foster home. They have not heard from their mother since September, 1971. She all of a sudden quit writing and when I called her to ask what happened she told me she no longer wanted to write to the boys because she knew she could never have them. I don't quite buy that excuse because it is not at all consistent with their behavior in the past years.

There has been no contact with the family at all. received phone calls concerning the boys, but has received no letters.

With nowhere else to go, and continued inaction by Children's Services the boys remained at the Oswalds.

State says shelter neglected children

The Allen House was a placement facility for unwanted children and troubled youth.

The facility had a history of neglecting and abusing the children placed there.
Children's Services noted concerns with the discipline and care the boys received at the Oswalds, but the boys were not removed.

In addition to the physical and emotional abuse, Willie also reported sexual abuse at the Oswalds.

**Life after the Oswalds:**

After ten years in the Oswald's home, the State removed Ray and Willie.

After leaving the Oswalds, the boys cycled through orphanages, group homes, and the juvenile detention center.

By the age of 14, Ray had already begun drinking and abusing drugs.
At the age of 18, Ray was released from state custody, lived alone, and was trying to survive on the streets.

I would like to add that I still feel Ray is basically a very decent person, but still needs help overcoming problems stemming from early abuse, neglect, a bad foster placement, and very negative family relationships. Also, Ray has been extremely honest in all his dealings with me.

Indeed, guilty to these charges before her Highness Strickland, who felt, as I did, Ray's past showed him as a young man in need of help not punishment. He released to go back to the life sake prayed. On 10.31.71 Ray was sl-

Hamilton County Children’s Services Record, p. 69
Where Are They Now?

Suzanne:
At 14, Suzanne ran away from home.

She lived on the streets and spent time in juvenile detention.

She got married at the age of 15 and had 2 children.

Suzanne left her abusive husband after 13 years of marriage.

She has been married 4 times.

Suzanne still struggles with mental and physical illnesses, but she finally has some stability in her life.

Rick:
Rick left home at an early age.

He briefly served in the military, but was discharged.

Rick struggled with drug abuse and spent time in and out of jails.

Rick never found a stable home or long-term employment.

He lives alone in a single-room transient motel in St. Petersburg.

He plays music on the street and in bars to make ends meet.
**Archie:**
Archie remained separated from the family as a teen.

He struggled with addiction and became involved in the criminal justice system.

He spent much of his adult life in and out of prison.

When he was not in prison, he was transient and lived alone.

At the age of 44, Archie committed suicide.

---

**George:**
As a teen, George began abusing alcohol and struggling with addiction.

George has wrestled with the demons from his abusive childhood his entire life.

He served 10 years in prison.

George struggles with mental health issues but is currently stable with counseling and a medication regime.