When the Pink Wilts

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I reported a good-faith concern, exactly as my contract required me to. I documented everything, absolutely everything. And at the end of the day, I couldn't do anything about it.

Summary

I worked as a carer at Nurse Next Door Brisbane from May 2025. In good faith, and in accordance with my contractual obligations, I raised concerns about two vulnerable clients who had told me they felt afraid and distressed at feeling pressured by their nieces. The company shared my concerns with those same nieces, and shortly afterward I was accused of theft — an allegation I consistently denied and which was never substantiated.

Months later, after returning from medical leave caused by that situation, I formally reported unsanitary conditions in the home of another client, whose primary carer was the daughter of the franchise owners. I was asked, unofficially, not to lodge that report. I lodged it anyway. Two days later, that same carer lodged a report against me, and the following day a recording was made of the client under circumstances that were never explained to me before my dismissal. Weeks later, that recording became the basis for my dismissal on 2 July 2026, without my being given a real opportunity to respond.

This is the story of what happens when someone follows the rules, documents everything, and the system still fails to hold. I have written this to warn other workers in similar situations.

Background

I worked as a carer at Nurse Next Door Brisbane — the specific Brisbane franchise, operated under The Trustee for Home Care Services Brisbane Pty Ltd — from May 2025. My contract was for a dual role: Home Care Employee in Aged Care (Level 2) and in Disability Care (Level 3, Pay Point 1), as a casual employee.

My contract included an explicit clause: if at any point I became aware of, or suspected, unlawful conduct by any member of the company's staff, I was required to report it immediately.

I was constantly minimised. To them, I was only good for cleaning and carrying bags — my training, my years at university, counted for nothing.

The Events

The Sisters

I built a real relationship with two sisters who were my clients. They told me their stories, including how they had worked in a coffee factory, how they had lost their middle sister in a nursing home because the nurses didn't have the patience to feed her slowly, and how that made them terrified of ending up somewhere like that themselves.

Over time they began telling me something more serious: that their nieces were letting themselves into the house with a key, unannounced, that they were pressuring them over the will, and that one niece had even asked them to leave the apartment to her daughter because she was unwell and had nowhere to live. The sisters wanted to leave everything to the church, not to

the nieces.

I asked Sarah, my supervisor, why they wanted the sisters to sign an authorised third-party document when both of them were capable of making their own decisions. I asked why one of the sisters was being called “paranoid” when the doctor said she was fine and I spent time with her. That conversation was put in writing.

One day I was present when Sarah went to the house to press one of the sisters to sign that document. She kept saying, “sign here, sign here.” I sat there, watching, saying nothing — feeling that I had been placed in a situation I had not chosen. The sister didn't sign. I am deeply glad she didn't.

The Meeting of 27 November

It took me three months to get a meeting with the franchise owner to clarify an earlier conflict involving another client. The meeting was finally set for 27 November. The day before, according to her, she had received an email from the nieces accusing me of stealing money from an envelope. I found out about that allegation sitting in that meeting, with no prior warning, with no opportunity to bring anyone with me. Before that, I had been called at all hours, while driving, at night — with no respect at all for my basic conditions. I was completely paralysed.

When I tried to raise the earlier conflict, and the notes that didn't match what had actually happened, the only response I got was that the clinical lead involved had twenty years of nursing experience, that she was beyond reproach, and that nothing I said would count for anything. I told her: fine, it's clear to me that things get swept under the rug here.

I left that office crying, devastated. After that meeting, Sarah called me asking for screenshots proving a day I had taken the sisters to the doctor. I sent them. Afterwards I was accused of having the screenshots, and they were used against me in the WorkCover process.

I ended up seeing a psychologist the company provided. One day, browsing the company's social media, I discovered that the same psychologist ran workshops with them — there were photos of them together. That's when I understood there was a real conflict of interest: I was telling everything that was happening to me to someone who seemed to be close to the very people I was complaining about. When I finally requested a report, it was vague, lukewarm.

All I had ever wanted, from the start, was to protect. The sisters used to say to me: “just let us die in peace.” That was all they asked for. And I thought: what wouldn't I give to have an aunt, a grandmother, someone like that — just to love her, to care for her. Not to wait for someone to die and obtain their things.

A Client I Will Call Dan

I arrived at a client's home to help him with household tasks, so he could gain independence — which was exactly what his family wanted. But the clinical lead in charge had not carried out the risk assessment properly. The bathroom was in an unsanitary condition.

It was not my job to clean that bathroom, or to judge why it hadn't been done. But it also wasn't right to leave my client alone when he was in need. I didn't leave.

Before I left that house, we had a real conversation — he cried, we hugged. I felt I had done the right thing by staying.

When I was later told I could have left whenever I wanted, it didn't feel right to me. I told them: a journalist reporting from a war doesn't leave. A teacher in a classroom doesn't leave when there's a problem. A doctor in surgery doesn't leave either. Why was I expected to leave my client's home simply because the assessment hadn't been done properly?

I escalated this to the franchise owner. Afterwards, the notes said the client had asked that I not return — but that did not make sense given what had actually happened.

Diane

I met Diane in 2025, shortly before her husband died. At the time she lived with her granddaughter, who was her primary carer. When I returned to work with her, months later, her primary carer was now someone else — the daughter of the franchise owners. I was not aware of any legal document authorising her to carry out banking and other affairs on Diane's behalf, and Diane told me there was none.

On 14 and 21 May 2026, I documented, with photographs, severe unsanitary conditions in her home: overflowing rubbish, unchanged nappies, insects in the microwave. On 22 May I sent a formal email reporting these conditions. That same day, her Care Designer called me on her day off and asked me not to lodge a formal incident report. I lodged the report anyway.

In that email I also included what Diane had told me: that a carer had arrived for her shift in pyjamas, had left her without food and without her medication that night, telling her to wait until the next day. Diane told me she was afraid to report these things, because of that carer's direct family connection to the company's management.

Two days later, that same carer lodged a report against me, accusing me of speaking badly about her to Diane — something I never did. The following day, a recording was made of Diane, which I only learned about afterwards. The person who made it was never identified to me before my dismissal.

While my own report was still “under investigation,” it seemed to me that the file that would cost me my job was being built in parallel. On 2 June, the company formally thanked me for “advocating on behalf of the client.” Three days later, I was suspended.

The Dismissal

On 2 July, at the final meeting, I brought all my documents, prepared. I had been told that no decision had been made, that it depended on how I defended myself. They showed me the recording for the first time — quickly, without giving me time. We took a fifteen-minute break. When we came back, I was told I was dismissed. I wasn't allowed to show any of what I had brought prepared. They said all of it was irrelevant. The company later said the client confirmed the recording; in the extract I was given, the questions put to her were leading, and the date was supplied to her.

In March 2026 I had written directly to the company's national CEO, sharing my story. She never replied to me personally, but it was on that occasion that head office contacted me for the first time. In September 2026, after the conciliation process before the Fair Work Commission closed without agreement, I wrote to her directly again. Before that, I had invited the franchise owner to take part in a consent arbitration process — he refused.

Lessons

I did everything you're supposed to do. I documented everything. I went to the union. I followed the official channels. And even so, the channels let me down — not because I did something wrong, but because the system simply isn't built to hold you up. The lack of access to legal advice was what cost me the most: I paid my union membership believing it entitled me to free legal advice, and when I needed it, I wasn't given it. I never got an explanation.

Someone who knew me well told me, from the very beginning: get out of there. And she was right. I knew I could leave, but I chose to stay — not out of naivety, but because I don't let myself be brought to my knees.

The one thing they cannot take from me is my history, because I documented everything. Everything I say, I can prove.

Caring for and treating with dignity the clients I had the chance to look after — I would do that exactly the same again, because at least I know I gave them dignity while I could.

Conclusion

My only wish, from beginning to end, was that this should never happen to anyone else. I don't want any other worker to be violated the way I was. I don't want others to be put in the same position as Diane.

I lost my job. But not my truth, and not my dignity — because those, they cannot touch.