

TOOK THE CHILDREN AWAY 1990

ARCHIE ROACH 1956-2022

Gunditjmarra and Bundjalung Elder

Verse 1

G
This story's right, this story's true.
I would not tell lies to you.

C
Like the promises they did not keep,
G
and how they fenced us in like sheep.
Said to us come take our hand,
set us up on mission land.

C
Taught us to read, to write and pray.

D
Then they took the children away.

CHORUS 1

G C
Took the children away, the children away.
G
Snatched from their Mothers breast,
D G
said this is for the best. Took them away.

Verse 3

G
The welfare man, the police man,
said you've got to understand.

C G
We'll give to them what you can't give, teach them how
to really live.

G
Teach them how to live they said, humiliated them
instead.

C
Taught them that and taught them this
D
and others taught them prejudice.

CHORUS 2

G C
Oh took the children away, the children away.
G D
Breaking their Mothers heart, tearing us all apart,
G
took them away.

Verse 4

G
One dark day on Framlingham, came and didn't give a
damn.

C G
My Mother cried go get their Dad, he came running,
fighting mad.
Mothers tears were falling down, my Dad shaped up and
stood his ground.

C

He said "You touch my kids and you fight me".

D
Then they took us from our family.

CHORUS 3

G C
Took us away, they took us away.
G D
Snatched from our Mothers breast, said this was for
G
the best, took us away.

Instrumental chords

| G | G | G | G | C | C | G | G | D | C | G | G |

Verse 5

G
Told us what to do and say, taught us all the white mans
ways.

C G
Then they split us up again, gave us gifts to ease the pain.
Sent us off to foster homes. As we grew up, we felt alone.

C
Cause we were acting white, yet feeling black.

D
One sweet day all the children came back.

CHORUS 4

G C
The children came back, the children came back.

G D
Back where their hearts grow strong, back where they all
belong.

G
The children came back.
I said the children came back.

C G
Oh the children came back. Back where they
D G
understand. Back to their Mothers land, the children
came back.

REFRAIN

(D) G C
Back to their Mother, back to their Father.

G D
Back to their Sister, back to their Brother.

G C
Back to their People, back to their land.

G
All the children came back,

C G
..... the children came back.

C G C G
..... the children came back, yes I came back.