

supervision – the episiotomy he gave me nearly reached my rectum and I had to have many stitches, inside and out. I was taken to Theatre also for a retained placenta [I believe this and the long labour was due to the condition called “white womb” from my fear as this can occur when the mother feels under threat and the natural instinct is that the body tries to “hold on” to the baby until danger passes]. My baby was taken to Intensive Care with a low Apgar score (I found out later) which meant she had been in distress and either had breathing difficulties or poor colour or similar, perhaps due to the pethidine but I am not sure. When I woke from my general anaesthetic and with my many stitches, I was on a general ward (I think) and the nursing Sister told me to collect my things and she made me walk, carrying my bag and personal items, to the annexe where they kept the single mums away from the ward with mums who had babies. Again I was told I was being moved to “not upset the mothers” because I was crying, as if I was not a mother. I was groggy and in pain from my episiotomy and asked if she would help me and she scoffed and said no, I could carry my own things. I was never offered a wheelchair, which I think should have been the protocol for someone still unsteady on their feet. I was then treated for an infection in my hand and up my arm because the doctor (maybe another trainee) did not use proper sterile precautions when putting in my IV. I also had my chest bound and was given medication when my milk came in. I was left with the feeling that I was used for training purposes and not given proper care as I didn't matter as much as the married mothers.

I was shown my baby in the delivery room but then she was taken away and I they would not tell me where. I overheard some nurses talking about the “Special Nursery” and I thought that might be where she was, so I followed them. I entered the nursery and asked to see my baby. I was told I should not be in there and the nurses seemed startled and nervous that I was, but I said I hadn't signed any papers as yet and so she was still my child and I wanted to see her. I identified my own baby immediately and saw that her name tag said [REDACTED]. I asked why they had named her as she was my baby and I had named her [REDACTED]. They said it was her new name, leading me to believe the new parents had already picked her name. (Not so.) I asked to hold her and they did let me hold her for a few minutes but then said I had to go or they would be “in trouble” for letting me in. The next day, I went again and asked to hold her and they said “no” - again, because it would cause “trouble”.. so that time, I just stood by her crib for a while and she held my finger in her tiny fist. I asked them to remove the [REDACTED] name and put [REDACTED]. These young nurses seemed very nervous about and unsure what to do as they had to follow “the rules”, but I had just stated what I wanted as I believed I still had a right. But - the next day I went again and she was gone. They told me she had gone to her new home and said how they new parents had been waiting so long for this child, I mustn't upset them by now trying to take her away and I should not be selfish but think of the wonderful life they could give her which I couldn't. Again – I was seen as the troublemaker and upsetting the applecart for everyone else by not being quiet and wanting to have some rights over my own baby. It was also made clear all along the way that I was seen as being incapable of being a good mother. Luckily, unlike others, I was not physically or chemically restrained, to my knowledge, but I do believe I could possibly have been sedated after that. I was unwell and “foggy” but it was put down to a rubella vaccination and my infected arm. At that stage, I had still been not wanting to sign the papers but then they said she had already gone so I felt it was like a *fait accompli*. I felt helpless and hopeless. In later years, I learnt it was a lie and my baby had not even left the hospital – and when she did, she was taken to

Ngala and was there for some weeks before being placed with adoptive parents (this information I got from my daughter who accessed her own records). I was never actually given an option to keep her – no advice was ever given regarding social security support or any kind of support actually. So I was 17, unemployed, and living with parents who did not want to even acknowledge I had a child. I could never speak of it from that time forward.

Even when still in Ngala, I was interviewed by women who came to the home, who I was told were social workers. They also never mentioned what help, if any, I could receive to enable me to keep my child. The discussion was only to find out a bit about me and the birth father so they could “match” the baby to the prospective parents. I asked if I had any say in what type of parents she would go to and I was told yes, I could. I believe this was to mollify me at the time and so let me believe I was doing the best thing, considering my request was totally ignored. I said I had done very well at school and I believed my child would also be intelligent and do well in the right environment, so I wanted her specifically to go to a family who valued a good education and could provide the child with this, a chance I hadn’t received myself. The assured me that they would. As it turned out, she went to a couple where the mother was a stay-at-home housewife and the father was a truck driver, living in a low socio-economic area. In later years, I met my daughter - she had registered with Jigsaw and so had I. It was not a happy reunion. I learned that they mocked my daughter for being “weird” because she – like me – liked art, poetry, and creative writing and was a sensitive child. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] She tells me she has not only childhood PTSD, but dissociative identity disorder. She has physical and mental scars. She was told she was “black” and they (her parents) had to “beat the black out of her” – even though I and her father are white and no indigenous heritage whatsoever. To this day, she believes she has indigenous heritage and either I am lying or I have been lied to in that regard, even in the face of DNA evidence and genealogical mapping, so deep is the belief instilled in her. Her mental disorders since her teen years due to the abuse and her rage against me has resulted in estrangement [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] and so the damage done by the practice of forced adoption (improper processes, lack of vetting of prospective parents) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

As a footnote to all this and a recommendation to this inquiry: I did go on to educate myself. At age 29, and a housebound mother of two young children, I attended a course called "New Opportunities for Women" where we were encouraged to try a range of new skills and to enable us to find a path towards re-skilling ourselves and also for personal development. This was a turning point in my life - I decided to do what I thought I could do...not what others tried to tell me I couldn't. I went back to school, I did my TEE and had the top score at my college, I gained entry to university as a mature age student - and a single mum - and had the top scores for my unit. When lack of money prevented me from completing my degree, I found a course to gain a new qualification and I have worked in that field for 35 years - with no break in

employment, all while raising my sons on my own. They will be in their 40's this year. Both of my boys did well - they are not drug addicts or criminals and were at no time "wards of the state" - things we were told our babies could be if we attempted to raise them. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

If only - like the "New Opportunities for Women" course, for example - someone had lifted me up instead of putting me down - had said "you are worth something, you can do it and this is the way how", giving confidence, information and guidance, instead of punishment and degradation ... simply for not being married.

If only proper procedures were followed in vetting prospective parents instead of what, I believe, amounted to baby farming and, I am told but have no proof, money under the table.

If only checks were in place to prevent possibly illegal and corrupt practices at institutions like Ngala and power not given to people such as [REDACTED] who have been lauded for their work but whose private face was so different to the public one.

If only. My life, my daughter's life, and her children's lives could have all been very different.

Moving forward : May solace now come to those who so desperately need it through this inquiry and beyond and may those who were responsible for these practices finally be exposed.

Thank you for your consideration.

[REDACTED]
