

I have never put my story down on paper. This will be the first time. I will try to keep it simple

I lived in a small country town out west over the Blue Mountains, My Mother left when I was 7 and my Dad raised 4 children on his own, I was the youngest, working 3 jobs for many years until one year he decided to send me to an Orphanage in Bathurst,(which is a story in itself ) I think I was about 11, I was there for 3 years, repeated 6<sup>th</sup> class as they didn't have anything higher, so when I came home I did first year high school, and that meant I was 1 year older then my peers so I left school and went to work.

When we turned 16 (1964) my Dad said we could go Sydney to see our Mum, so off I trotted to Sydney (and the big wide world) I worked and had fun, my girlfriend and I went off to Surf City to watch Billy Thorpe play in his band, surfed at Bondi Beach, and we did what teenagers did in the 60's

I had meet a wonderful boy named [REDACTED] and we had a great year or more and we were mad about each other, and wanted to get married, about February 1966 I was 17 years and 4 months old just a baby really. I found myself in the family way, no trouble we thought we will get married. Well it wasn't to be my Father wouldn't hear of it (there is another great long story just about that) but not at this time.

So off to Croydon I went, my 3 months there was not the most pleasant time I had ever had, lots of cleaning and doing things in the running of a place like that, a dogs body I guess you could say

When it was time to go to Hospital, they just put me an Ambulance and sent me off on my way, you didn't get much sympathy so you had to just grin and bare it, there was no use complaining , and if you asked a simple question like what's going to happen they would just say something like don't be so silly your just going to have your baby , I have unfortunately suppressed or buried a lot of my past, but I do remember them wrapping me in brown paper to dry up my milk, that was awful

My Son was born on the 29<sup>th</sup> of Oct 1966 about 3 weeks early, my treatment in the Hospital was I think very ordinary, I was on my own a lot and they didn't seem to take much notice of me they just came and did what they needed to do and that was it I was discharged on the 4<sup>th</sup> of Nov, and they sent myself and another girl back to the home in a taxi, but the thing was we weren't alone we had our babies and two Mother Craft Nurses with us and we were supposed to pretend that they weren't there. That is when I pinned a

Saint Christopher Medal on his little jacket , the nurse looked at me with a very puzzling look on her face as if to say what are doing he is not your baby .

I was no longer back at the home and they were at me to sign all these papers, and when I ask what they were for they would just say, you need to sign them so your baby can go to a good home, because you won't be able to look after him, not like a REAL family can.

You went home to try and get on with your life, having been told to just forget it and move on, easier said than done, [REDACTED] had gone into the Army in the call up so I didn't see him anymore .(after being torn apart which is part of the story which I need not go into at this point , we were still in love ) My life moved along, I got a job and tried to have a normal life but I was missing something I felt very empty and needed love ( family love ) I would spend some of my time back home with my dad and some of my time with my mum in Sydney ,split between the two of them ,trying to be a good daughter as I was still a young girl 18 19 .this went on for 2 years and I guess something had to give .

My second Son was born on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 1968 in Newcastle, I was lost and with no help from my family (only to find a place for me to go ) I went through it all over again, Social workers were at me to sign the papers, all the time saying wont it be nice if we can give your baby to the same family, a brother for their other son ,having nowhere else to turn, and given no encouragement from the authorities the inevitable happened .I returned home to stay with my Mum ,and it was never talked about again .

As it happened a few weeks later a letter came from Newcastle Hospital, thinking it was just some routine paper work I opened it, only to find it was to tell me that my son had passed away on the 20<sup>th</sup> of Oct. Cause of death 1. (a) Cardiac failure (b) Congenital heart Lesion. Duration of last illness. II. Respiratory distress Syndrome (days) when I look back on it now I relies just how cruel and incentive it was, no warning or counseling just a letter

I am very happy to let you know that the WA DCP is thinking about changing this by putting in place some kind of register that will in the future be able to let all parties that need to know of a death will be informed be it a child a mother or whoever .

So I pick myself up and my life goes on for a couple more years, working and trying to get my life together. Looking for something or someone to love or to just tell me my life will get better, but it goes from bad to worse.

My Third Son was born on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1970 at Crown Street in Sydney

This was written On my papers when I received them 28 years later

“This is her third confinement and there have been no lasting relationships with any of the Birth Fathers, she is a girl of average to low average intelligence. She seems a sad and directionless girl, lacking ability to make close associations.”

Why did it get to this point in the first place, partly my own fault, partly my family, but surely it was mostly the Governments and so called Authorities that were supposed to be

There for my welfare and we trusted them to do the Right thing, but boy was that a big mistake.

When the laws changed in WA in 1995 or so I went looking for my 2 sons. After a lot of back and forth corresponding with the NSW department of Community Services and the Centacare Adoption Services in Croydon . I had the information on [REDACTED] my first son, so to cut a long story short I wrote to him saying who I was, I wanted to write to him not his Adoptive Parents as he was an adult 28years old. This is what I wrote

Dear [REDACTED]

I'm writing to you to introduce myself, my name is [REDACTED] and I am hoping you may be able to help me with some information I am seeking

I moved to Sydney when I was 16 and spent about 3 years with my mother and it was during this period that with great regret and anguish that I was to surrender a son born to me on the 29<sup>th</sup> of Oct 1966. Who is now known as [REDACTED]?

If you know this information to be correct I would be most grateful to a reply from you as soon as possible, as I will be in Sydney from the 15<sup>th</sup> of February until the 25<sup>th</sup> of February and would love to organize a very much longed for meeting, I will be waiting anxiously for your reply before I leave Perth My Perth address is!!!!!! My Phone Is!!!!!! My Sydney Contact will be my sister!!!!!!!

Yours truly, [REDACTED]

I waited and waited and had no reply, so I thought the next thing I could do was ring his Adoptive Parents which I didn't really want to do, so I rang on a Sunday and she was taken back when I said who I was she wasn't very happy and said " I paid a lot of money to have this kept hidden , so I said to her I am not breaking the law if you hadn't heard the laws have changed and I would like to get in touch with [REDACTED] , she went on to say lots of things like I don't know how to tell him, because they hadn't told him that he was Adopted ,and how they were going to tell him when he was old enough ,and then when he was 21 and then when he got married ,and so on . .So I just said well it's time to tell him now. She said he is a very sensitive boy and I don't know how he will take it, I will go see him soon.

Tuesday the phone rang it was [REDACTED] we had a wonderful talk he sounded just like his Dad, he agreed to see me went I went to Sydney (more about that later). And the reason in the first place that I had to go to Sydney was to find out about my other son as they were having trouble finding him, as it turned out sadly he had passed away when he was 8 months old, on the death certificate he died 16<sup>th</sup> of January 1971 with an extract certificate attached stating cause of death "Asphyxia, due to accidental strangulation when his neck became caught in the straps of a car seat." But in a letter sent from Community Services [REDACTED] " the Adoptive mother sent 3 photos and wrote this "He was a big boy for his age, very chubby and very happy. Right up until the time he died, aged 10 months, he seemed very healthy and was progressing normally. SIDS was not heard of then and I

can't help wondering if it was something like that, It seemed to me that he simply died in his sleep .I don't imagine that any of this will be a comfort to you but please know that he was a much loved and wanted baby in our family.”

And the reason that they couldn't fine him on cross references was that he was buried in the Adoptive name, but the Adoption was not final, and he should have been buried in my name, and I still think to this day that I should have been informed, and I wouldn't have had to go through all this pain, and I wouldn't have thought he was alive all those years.

Back to [REDACTED] we have had a very good reunion, I looked for and found [REDACTED] and ask him would he like to meet his son and he said yes, so we meet [REDACTED] together and I was glad he was there as all I did was sit and hold [REDACTED] hand crying most of the time, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] hit it off right from the start, they found that they had lots in common. As you do with your blood family, I get on very well with his wife, whose birthday happens to be on the same day as mine. I have a lovely granddaughter she turned 15 this year, and she calls me [REDACTED]

I have been married for 39 years this October; to a wonderful guy I Don't know how he has put up with me for so long. I have two wonderful sons with him, and 4 Grandchildren 3 girls and 1 boy and my Granddaughter from [REDACTED] marriage, maybe I have proved them wrong, and that sad and directionless girl with average to low average intelligence has found her way no thanks to them.

Yours truly, [REDACTED]



# ARMS

Association Representing  
Mothers Separated from their  
children by adoption Inc



28 June 2023

To all members of the Committee

Attached is a submission made by [REDACTED] to the Senate Enquiry. Although this submission has already been published elsewhere I ask that the Committee read it because it demonstrates the total absence of any duty of care towards [REDACTED] as a young person and it is typical of the experience of many women who are too traumatized and frightened to speak out. It will be obvious to the Committee that although there are differences in the details of the overall experiences for each mother whose children were taken there are also many similarities. I ask that you take [REDACTED] experience as representing that of the many women who are still too shamed, scared and traumatized to speak out. I have taken the liberty of pointing out areas where her experience is shared by many other mothers who have been separated from their children by forced adoption.

It would have been an awful journey for [REDACTED] when she was finally able to discover details of the welfare of her lost children and somehow she has even survived that despite the shocks she must have received as she uncovered the truth. She has courageously obtained some of her records and I take my hat off to her for having the fortitude to confront the terrible treatment she was subjected to as a young woman.

I ask that you take particular note of the comments about [REDACTED] that were written into her records and is reproduced on the second page of her submission. Those comments say more about the writer than about [REDACTED] but they are typical of the attitude towards pregnant young women. I happened to be at the sitting when [REDACTED] read this paper out and I was very moved indeed both by the content and her delivery of it. I have asked her to submit it to this Committee because I believe it will benefit the Committee to take heed of what she has said about her experiences at the hands of social workers, doctors and other medical professionals whose only motivation seemed to be that of removing babies and placing them into an adoption scenario.

I have known [REDACTED] for many, years. I am amazed at how she managed to survive the awful treatment she received as a young woman. In the years that I have known her she has led a productive and busy life. She has raised two sons with her husband, and they are both decent Australian citizens. Since she wrote this description of her experiences her husband has unfortunately passed away but again, despite this terrible loss, she has picked up the pieces and simply gets on with life. [REDACTED] late husband left money to [REDACTED] "taken" son. This perhaps demonstrates the respect and love shared by all the family during their long marriage.



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She has contributed time, money and effort into helping others whose lives have been torn apart by forced adoption and separation. ██████ worked tirelessly producing the newsletters for ARMS and was our co-ordinator as well for many years. That has been a big contribution towards the wellbeing of mothers who still, even after all this time, reach out for help as their pain and trauma increases with the years. This ‘directionless girl’ has achieved so much and is certainly able to sustain long-term relationships. For someone judged to be of low average intelligence, she has achieved a great deal as she assisted her late husband with his business as well as raising their sons. To describe a frightened, pregnant young woman in that way, and one who wanted her babies, is disgraceful. ██████ has proven that assessment to be totally wrong. The injustice here is that the person who wrote those words has lived their life secure in the knowledge that they knew what was best for a young woman they judged incompetent in some way. I can tell you ██████ is a high achiever, a hard worker who simply needed a helping hand when she was vulnerable. She did not need to be trampled into the ground so that the removal of her child could be justified.

██████ had a strong relationship with her firstborn’s father and yet she was disparaged as being unable to maintain a steady relationship. That is and was untrue. ██████ difficulty was that her own father refused permission for her to marry. This is a common theme among many of us: our families decided that we should not marry. From there the adoption separation machine took over. In ██████ case ██████ father was conscripted to go to Vietnam. This situation crops up quite often where the father was sent to war and the pregnant fiancée was pushed into the adoption system by her family of origin. It is an underlying theme of how these young mothers were used and abused by a system that was determined to supply infertile people with babies. ██████ experience is representative of that of many of us and I ask that the Committee give due acknowledgement of that.

██████ writes of “not being taken much notice of,” whilst in the hospital. This was a deliberate strategy used by medical staff not to interact with single mothers thus leaving them isolated as they tried to deal with their first experience of childbirth and its sequelae, hormonal fluctuations, painful stitches, bleeding and that terrible, terrible loss of part of themselves so brutally taken from the delivery bed. In this case there was downright neglect. ██████ is rhesus negative. She did not receive any anti-D immunoglobulin with tragic consequences for her next baby. Medical neglect was usual for many single mothers. There is no excuse for this lack of duty of care.

As for being informed by mail that her son had died. That stands on its own as callous, cruel and dismissive. At a time when ██████ was trying to persuade her mother to allow her to bring this baby home. All ██████ wanted was to look after her newborn baby. It is hard to believe that anyone in any position of responsibility could consider it proper to send a cold-hearted letter with that kind of information.



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At the reunion of [REDACTED] and her firstborn son, [REDACTED] was told by the adopters that they had never told this young man he was adopted. This went against the promises made by people who obtained babies in this way that they would be truthful with that child about their adopted status. It is incredibly damaging to lie about a person's true origins and again demonstrates a complete lack of honesty and integrity shown by many adopters who wanted to 'own' someone else's child and were prepared to turn a child's truth into one of lies and secrecy. It shows no respect for the rights of the child whose welfare was supposed to be paramount. It is to [REDACTED] credit that she has managed to maintain a good relationship with her son over so many years. The reunion road is a really difficult one to traverse yet somehow [REDACTED] has managed it well.

I apologise that this submission is a little late. The fault is mine. I hope that does not negate the importance of the message that is inherent in [REDACTED] experience of adoption separation.

Respectfully yours,

*Lynne Devine*

Lynne Devine  
Co-ordinator,  
ARMS Inc



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