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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Submission to the Inquiry on Forced Adoption in WA By Gordon M Hall (Born Donald Gordon Lungley)

My story, like many of the others, has good and not so good.

I have kept it short so as not to bog down in small details.

I was born in November 1949 and my mother's father would not let her bring me home from hospital. As a result of this she left me behind as she departed the hospital, and I was made a ward of the state and placed in the receiving home. I was placed into foster care with [REDACTED] at 3 months of age. I contracted pneumonia soon after and again at 4 years of age – I am sure a result of the environment I was in.

I was born Donald Gordon Lungley, and my name was legally changed in August 1957

It was [REDACTED] who bought me up until I left home at 16 years of age. They told me that I was adopted at birth however some things did not add up. I was christened at 5 years of age and my name was then changed to Gordon Maxwell Hall for the purposes of schooling and other paperwork.

I visited or met my mother periodically and I remember her giving me birthday presents etc. When I was seven years of age I was taken to a meeting in town (Perth) and a man joined us. There were the three of us and him. He asked me, "When we go inside a man will ask you who do you want to live with?" and he wanted to know what I would say.

I said "My mother."

He answered – this person, pointing to [REDACTED] and I said no, "My Mother."

He disappeared and on returning there was some adult talk, and we went home.

I was never told what this was about.

My little brain worked out that if this happens again my answer will be this mother pointing to [REDACTED] so I could go the next step and then tell the man inside who I really wanted to live with.

My birth mother was always referred to as that awful lady who will come and take you away. A few months later we went back to town and waited outside. The man came outside and joined us. After the adult talk, we went home.

After I found my birth mother in 1992, I discovered what had really happened.

My birth mother's boyfriend who was from NSW did ask her marry him however his mother got him back to NSW and they lost contact.

My birth mother went home to her parent's place in Mount Lawley.

After my birth I was placed in a receiving home for 3 months and I was then given to [REDACTED]

Although the [REDACTED] were persistent on their request to my birth mother to adopt me, the answer was always no.

In 1957 my birth mother had to front the court and to say what she wanted.

Apparently and unbeknown to me I was to say what I wanted.

At this second court date my birth mother was in another room and as her father had recently died, she was in a confused and emotional state and couldn't take on the added emotion and just signed the papers.

From about 6 years of age, I had the sleepout as my room which was not secure – that gave me nightmares for years!

My life then carried on with the [REDACTED] although when 10 years of age I demanded to see my birth mother.

This caused all sorts of problems for me in the household. Of course, I never saw my biological mother again until 1992.

In 1981 I joined Jigsaw and worked hard speaking to politicians and others. I corresponded with the appropriate government departments and some of the answers they gave were designed to throw me off the scent.

Once the law was changed, I was able to apply for my birth certificate (in 1992) and even then, a public servant verbally tried to steer me away from searching for my birth mother's marriage certificate.

Within six days of receiving my birth certificate I found my mother. I was then able to sort the fact from fiction given to me by the [REDACTED] and their extended family members.

It turns out that my birth mother had travelled across the country trying to find me after the [REDACTED] left WA in 1961.

My biological mother's sister, a doctor, delivered three of our four children and told me that she always wondered if I was her sister's son.

My biological mother and I have a good relationship and keep in regular contact.

[REDACTED] had all the details including my biological father's name.

When in 1992 I went and told the [REDACTED] I had found my biological mother they immediately became cold towards me and never came to any family functions of ours again.

The [REDACTED] passed away in 2007 and 2009.

I continued the search for my biological father and had changed to searching graves only however in January 2020 I did another DNA test (previously Heritage and National geographic had bought no results) This one was with Ancestry and in February 2020 I found a cousin with the same surname as my father.

It took me three months (as I was overseas and then Covid hit) for me to locate my father in Queensland. I have a great relationship with him and see him twice a year.

THE Effects

1. I always wonder how the three months left in a crib with no mothering affected my personality and my development.
2. The relationships of my kids to their grandparents changed once the [REDACTED] were advised that I had found my biological mother.
3. Whenever I visit my biological mother, she looks distant in the eyes and I am sure feels bad for not fighting the last bit for me.
4. I believe that this sort of life built a certain resilience that has helped me through life.

The strong support of my wife is what has got me through all of this – she even took the brunt of some of this from the [REDACTED].

I do not understand why the Welfare departments of the day did not speak to the foster children and even the biological mothers to find out what was really going on, physically and mentally.

I am hoping that this inquiry will recognize the damage done to many lives that cannot be reversed and that this does not happen to any person in the future.

Interestingly my youngest daughter has a child by surrogacy but has been completely open about who carried her etc. and the child takes in her stride. I am sure this has come about because of my experiences.

There is so much more I could write however I think my main points are covered.