

Submission

Inquiry: Commonwealth Contribution to former Forced Adoption Policies and Practices.

In 1963 I gave birth to a baby girl who was born the day after my 16th birthday, .

I planned to keep my baby I didn't know how I would look after her by myself, but I knew I would manage; the alternative, to me, was not a consideration.

I kept my baby with me after birth, that is, until my parents informed the social services people that I could not keep her and that she would be adopted out. I of course disputed this but, was still moved to a ward that accommodated this barbaric practice.

Meetings for me were set up daily, sometimes twice a day, by social services people, in these meetings I was told that I could not look after my baby properly and would be doing a great injustice to her by doing so. I was bullied, threatened and intimidated, and eventually told that they would back date the birth certificate to before my birthday and allow my parents to sign the adoption form if I did not.

After these meetings, I felt totally demoralised and eventually did not have the strength to continue the fight. I believed (was told) that after I got out of the home there was a way that I could get her back, adoption was not finalised for 30 days.

The morning she was taken I was told to bath and dress her; she was then taken away and given to another woman who was waiting in the next room. I wasn't told until I had waited for them to bring her back that she was gone. They took my baby away from me when she was fourteen days old I was devastated. I was told to go home!

I tried to find her, but was continually told to forget her she was gone; I was met with a blank wall where ever I turned.

It was so hard, my heart ached for her my arms were so empty.

Approximately 28 years later I met my daughter again. I received a letter from social services to say that she had been looking for me and wanted to meet me. Although, in my heart I wanted to meet her I was also terrified that she may not have forgiven me. The meeting was set up and it was incredible, I wanted to hold her, I wanted to smell her it was as if this piece of my being had come back to me and all I wanted to do was put it back.

After a wonderful but tumultuous 5yrs my daughter left me again and took my two grandchildren with her, I have not heard from them since. I went to social services adoption dept to ask for their help, but to no avail.

At the time of my baby's birth or when she came back into my life the offer of support or counselling was never given to me. I was left to feel lost, alone, unworthy and very, very sad

I have suffered from depression for many years. It was as if my feelings had no value.

If I had help when our reunion was set up I am sure the outcome could have been different. I believe she was given counselling, but, I was left to flounder. (She had had a difficult relationship with her adoptive mother) How does one know how to handle such a situation, I tried, I loved her so much, but that was not enough the damage had been done a long time ago. And, nothing was going to change that.

Acknowledgement of the pain and suffering that has been caused is a start. But, I cannot begin to think of ways that myself and other women in my position could be compensated. I hold so much anger and resentment for the past government system that allowed this to happen. I have no respect and would feel insulted and patronized if a "sorry" was given, please spare me that!

Thank you for at least giving me this opportunity to have my say.