

SUBMISSION

It would be appreciated if you could fill this questionnaire out and post it back to Origins Inc. PO Box W18, FAIRFIELD NSW 2165. This questionnaire will be forwarded to our legal advisers to evaluate coercive procedures pertaining to various hospitals and agencies with a view to a class action.

1. Name and address

Lina Eve, (previously Lina Freda Fleischer)
(...)

2. What year and month did you give birth to the child who was adopted?

January 1964

3. What was your age and marital status at the time?

17 years, unmarried

4. Where did it take place? (City/Regional town etc) & Name of hospital?

Sydney, NSW. Crown Street Women's Hospital

5. Was the hospital public or private?

Public

6. Please give short details about any pre birth conversations with social workers, obstetricians, psychiatrists or other hospital staff concerning adoption.

Esp, do you remember whether you personally indicated you wanted to keep the child or have the baby adopted.

I strongly expressed my wish to keep my baby; in fact, it's on my social records that I wanted to keep her. However, both the social worker and the hospital staff kept telling me I was being immature, selfish, and had unrealistic expectations wanting to keep her. They told me if I loved my child, I would give her the chance of a better life and sign the adoption papers. I was told I had nothing to offer a baby and was selfish to want to keep her.

7. Please give short details of what happened in the labour ward.

I was treated inhumanely. A nurse even told me the pain I was experiencing was punishment for getting pregnant before marriage. I was ignored and left alone with the contractions until the birthing began. I had no idea what to expect. They shouted at me, and then pushed a gas mask onto my face. They made comments about me, but didn't talk to me at all. Just as I felt as if I was turning myself inside out trying to push the baby out, a pillow was placed in front of my face. I heard a short cry and they must have taken my baby out of the room, even before the placenta was expelled.

I was given some medication (I have the medical records) and when I woke, had no idea

where I was or what day it was. Later I found out I had been moved to another hospital.
(Lady Wakehurst, Sydney)

8. Were you allowed to see and hold the baby during or after the birth – without restriction?

No, even though I asked to, I was not allowed to see my child after she was born. I thought I must have given birth to a monster as they had whisked my baby away so fast and wouldn't give her to me. I had no idea that this was hospital policy with the babies of unmarried mothers they hoped would be available for adoption. I had no plans to allow her to be adopted.

There followed the pressure of being told over and over by nurses and the social worker that I would have no money and nowhere to live and therefore had nothing to give my baby. I was still hazy from the drugs and traumatized about not seeing my baby... I started to give up the fight. However, I told the social worker I wouldn't sign adoption papers until I saw for myself that my daughter was not deformed, as then I figured I would be able to keep her as no one else could love her but me. So they allowed me to see, but not touch her for about a minute and I saw even though she was asleep, she was perfect.

9. Were you taken to a different ward/hospital?

Yes, I don't remember how I was transferred, but I woke up in the Lady Wakehurst Hospital, Sydney. I had to wait until someone told me where I was. It was very frightening and confusing.

10. Do you feel you were given medication/drugs that affected you after the birth?
(Medical records available)

Yes, I was. I have the records. And they had a very disorientating effect on me.

10A. Were you given drugs to dry up your milk, or were your breasts bound prior to consent being signed?

Yes to both those questions.

11. Were you asked to sign adoption consent papers or did you request to?

I was bullied and coerced into signing adoption papers

12. If so, how many days after the birth and what were the circumstances?

(records available on request at DOCS)

I don't remember which day, but on my social records it states I had "unrealistic expectations" and "still wanting to keep her baby"

13. Who asked you to sign the adoption consent form? Eg social worker, nun, doctor

Initially, it was the social worker, but other hospital staff commented negatively on any idea of my keeping my child as well.

14. Do you feel that you were persuaded or coerced into signing the form?

Yes, Yes, Yes! Absolutely!

15. Was any pressure brought to bear on you at this or at any other time?

Yes, constantly and in the most negative fashion.

15A. Were you told that you had 30 days to change your mind? (after 1967) and who advised you?

Not that I recall, but then my baby was born in 1964.

15B. Were you aware that (prior to 1967) you could reclaim your baby up until the adoption order was made – 0 – 18 months?

No, not at all, I had no idea!

16. Did you make any attempt to revoke the consent and if so what was the result?

No, I didn't know I had the right to do that.

17. Have you seen any medical, social work or other records concerning your confinement / the adoption? If so, what do they indicate?

Yes, I have my social records. They say I was an "arty type" depressed, with unrealistic expectations, wanting to keep her baby, immature, etc

18. Were you offered any options other than adoption?

No. Not that I can remember

19. Was it ever suggested to you that you might regret the surrender of your child?

Never

20. Any other information?

My medical records have "BFA" stamped on them...even though I had said from the start I wanted to keep my baby. So its clear to me they had the adoption of my child as their intention all along. I was heavily drugged; so much so that I don't recall being moved to lady Wakehurst and can't actually recall signing any papers. I know I didn't have any legal counsel either before or during any signing and I thought this was odd as I was under 18 and young people under 18 could not borrow money for a car, rent an apartment or get married without their parents permission, yet I was asked to sign my child away without any legal representation and with the false idea I was doing the altruistic thing by giving my child up for adoption.

I was made to feel as if I was sinking into the mire of the dregs of humanity and I was risking having my baby sink with me. I was made to feel that the only way to save her was to give her up. I was pressured to sign adoption papers as I was told that a lovely couple were waiting to take my baby back to their beautiful home and give her everything that I would never be able to. That to hesitate, meant my baby would be stuck in the hospital, alone, until I signed the papers. Yet, I found out many years later that in fact, my daughter had been kept at the hospital for about 3 weeks, alone and unloved.

I had bouts of depression for years which led to several suicide attempts which I didn't associate with losing my daughter to adoption until after our reunion when the bouts of depression, (which I eventually recognized as unresolved grief) finally stopped. ...26 years after they had started.

Lina Eve 20th March 2011