

My submission number 202 (name withheld) was forwarded to the State Enquiry into Forced Adoption procedures this year and is available on the web as part of your enquiry. I would now like to add the following to this submission as again a Non-Identified basis please. This additional submission was omitted due to clinical self-protection and the painful reality that it occurred to me in August 1968 following the birth of my daughter, and whilst I was a post-natal patient in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Mothers & Babies in Adelaide, S.A. From therapeutic discovery I now realise the impact this has had on my life (that of my husband and subsequent children) and the importance of acknowledging all of my story.

In my submission (202) under the heading Post Natal Care & Experience following the Social Worker made "no comment", to continue, I realised that no member of the medical/nursing staff had on any occasion asked me how I was feeling about my birth experience, my baby and her future or the impending Adoption process. I felt confused and distressed and wondered about my health generally and my ability to cope with the fact that I had given birth to a beautiful healthy infant but could not provide her with both a "mother and a father", a home to go to or any ability or means to rear and support her in any way. Did I have a mental health problem, as I considered I had made a huge error of judgement in my life, and was I suffering from a mental illness, was I going to go "mad". I felt my concerns needed investigating on the one hand and on the other at the very least some re-assurance and perhaps guidance about my fears for my future and that of my daughter. I asked the staff to call a Psychiatrist who would at least I thought, help me understand the experience and be better able to cope with it as a result of his assessment.

It was probably in the first week after the birth that a tall distinguished looking doctor wearing a very expensive kind of suit was ushered into my room by a midwife (she left the room) and stood opposite me whilst I was sitting on the edge of the bed. After I told my story very briefly, and I asked him " what was wrong with me, where had I gone so wrong" the psychiatrist made the following remarks:

"You must have enjoyed the fucking that created your baby, all those sperm exploding against the walls of your vagina" !  
He then concluded his visit by saying that I was 'emotionally immature'.

Interview over. I was left with the feeling that he intended to make me feel powerless afraid and anxious; he had indeed succeeded if that was his objective. There was no advice or compassion. He had violated my rights to feel understood to seek information, to be reassured by a health professional post-natally and as I felt so shocked and stunned that a doctor could speak with a patient in that manner, I have never disclosed this experience to anyone in past 43 years up until recently, as it was too painful confronting and unbelievable. The doctors and medical staff I had observed as a student and as a Registered Nurse were compassionate helpful and professional in their approach and attitude when speaking with patients. This psychiatrist had in essence compounded my fear of intimidation my anxiety, my very existence towards feeling accepted acknowledged and respected as a young woman (my sexuality was in question here) and as a young mother. All my human rights were violated in one fell swoop !

My reflection of my experience and my reality today of a 66 year old woman was that this act by this psychiatrist was one of sexual abuse by a medical professional. I hope that in writing this it helps other women who may be silenced by such abuse. I would have been punished by both the Medical and Nursing professions if I had spoken out, and not been believed. I also hope that those who have been entrusted with the honour dignity and prestige that goes with being called Doctor in a caring profession, are never permitted to be perpetrators of the crime of Sexual Abuse and manage to get away with it under the umbrella of their profession and its inherent privileges.