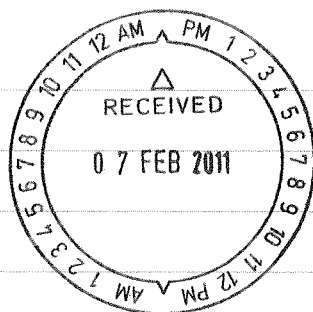




(...)

30th January 2011

"Senate inquiry into Commonwealth contribution to former forced adoption policies and practices"

I Lorraine Marguerita Griffith, am a citizen of the Commonwealth of Australia resident in the State of New South Wales.

As an Australian citizen, the Commonwealth affords me protection from the unlawful and harmful actions that threaten my rights to life, liberty and justice from those who would deny me these rights, within and without, the borders of Australia

(...)

My son, [redacted] passed away on 16/11/2011 in Western Australia. I attended his funeral in Perth on 26/11/2011 and am still in a stage of bereavement. Please make allowances for my grief at this time. My son lived to hear the apology from the W.A. State government for past adoption practices. Had he lived for this Senate inquiry, he would also have lodged his submission. I therefore lodge personal letters from him to me, by way of same, so you may have some insight into his suffering from the adoptee's perspective.

Other relevant documents are attached.

Lorraine M Griffith
Sydney - 30/1/2011

PART I

(Sydney - 30th January 2011) ①

My son said to me on our reunion in 1994, "even a reptile protects its young from predators" A mother and new born young are safer in the jungle because she knows the predators are there and is on guard against them. It is a very simplistic statement, actually, the reptiles are better off. In this so-called "civilized" society, the predators are hidden behind disguises and masks, stealing away the young on "moral" grounds and falsely promising to protect and care, but preying on them, betraying.

What mother would knowingly and willingly hand her child up for sacrifice on the altar of vanity and ego of the adoptive parents? To fill a void in their lives? Certainly not. Her concern is solely for her child, "you threw me to the wolves" you said, my son, I was assured I was throwing you away from the pack, that is society. This is what they told me to force me to surrender you! The pack that would have persecuted, stigmatised, handicapped and torn you to shreds all your life. When I tried to voice my grieving and sorrow of all those 36 years, my heartbreak and regret, you called me "self-indulgent." No defence allowed by you, the barrister.

You have lived all your life knowing you were a bastard you said, weeping. If your attitude is thus, then you have joined the foe, crossed over to the other side, condemning a naive, trusting and deceived young girl, deprived of support, forced to bend to the pressures of the enemy. Your grievance in this instance,

(2)

is not just that you were adopted, abused and deprived of me, but primarily that you were illegitimate. You too, bow to the pressures of society, adopt their "morality". You have not escaped the stigma through adoption. You in fact, because of vanity, feel inferior - others have made you feel so. This is where the real fight is.

"You have paid your debt to society" the nurse told me, holding you in her arms, after your birth, distant and out of reach from me. She found a way to contaminate even that one brief precious, beautiful memory and momentary glimpse! This, as you know, is the expression used when a prisoner is released from jail. What irony that you became a barrister! I was looked on in a worse light than a felon! This was the ultimate disgrace and crime - to be pregnant and unmarried!

Worse than a murderer, I served my sentence. In 1994, 36 long years of misery, solitary confinement and inconsolable and I know now, the pain will never leave me. I will go to my grave with it, but I will fight to ensure that a similar fate does not befall others. Forewarned is forearmed! To speak of my tragedy and yours so that others may learn to avoid it, for if we remain silent, we become accomplices.

You managed to act a role until 1989 when you were 31 and your child was born. Then unselfish love entered your life and you found yourself unable to be a father to your son, to give him the emotional

(3)

stability he needed because you were unstable and deficient. you had no suitable role model and you did not know who you were. you identified your own birth and infancy with your son's, you regressed to childhood to look for yourself and had been steadily unravelling and floundering since. Even a period of private psychiatric consultation was unsuccessful, diagnosed "anxious" and given tranquilisers to try to dampen it down.

Standing in court, in wig and gown, centre stage, you said the questions kept coming to you. "Who am I?" "Am I the product of rape or incest?" "Why doesn't my mother want me?" "You tell me you are obsessed with me because I am 'the key to your reconstruction' and nothing else can be attended to by you or even thought of. You need me you say, as a matter of life and death, it is your survival that is at stake. You cannot bear to be parted from me for you need constant reassurance and reaffirmation of your 'identity'. Your life was falling apart all around you, but you could only yearn to be with your mother.

You were told by your adoptive father not to look for me - as you might not like what you found, that it might be something "very unpleasant". So your mother looked for you and found you as soon as the law and circumstances allowed. She could not rest until she knew that her beloved son, her most precious gift from Heaven, was happy, healthy and facing life.

(4)

confidently. Not looking for forgiveness or acceptance, but to know that her great sacrifice, in spite of all the unrelieved and unending anguish, had at least, for her child, been the "right thing" as they had told her, and worthwhile. To also give to him his proud and illustrious genetic family background, should he need it or want it. A family history, most amazingly, filled with high-achievers predominantly in the legal profession.

How overjoyed and astounded you were when I finally gave you that history, withheld by me from you until you were emotionally stable enough to cope. As you said to your wife before you passed away last November "you know May, I never had to prove anything" By the time you found peace at last your body gave out.

On our reunion in 1994, your mother was prepared for rejection, hostility, even indifference. What she was not prepared for was the nightmare she found, the condition you were in, the multiple personalities confronting her or the great need you had of her. To find that my beautiful, gifted, perfect, sensitive and innocent little baby had been used as a whipping boy for a brute. A creature, who, because of his own feelings of inadequacy based on his infertility had abused, terrorised, brutalised my son to relieve his self-hatred. You were a helpless tiny victim and a provocation to him, a reminder of his failure to produce his own child and because you

were good, clever, loving and fertile.

To have to hear from you, the crimes he committed against you and your younger adopted sister over many years was more than I could bear to take in. Instead of finding some comfort in our reunion, I was faced with your enormous anger towards me, blaming me for the treatment you received at his hands. (...)

(...)

(...)

and your subsequent discovery of your adoption papers at that time, added to my dismay. The fact that he had a brain tumour removed was no excuse, for the ill-treatment, cruelty and attacks on your masculinity continued thereafter.

(...)

(6)

This has tainted your relations with women ever since. No wonder you were married for 13 years before you reluctantly agreed to having a child. He made the womb for you a fearful and dangerous territory. What poison he injected into you - his poison!

He encouraged your studies and you excelled. He could strut, perform in public as the proud "father" feeding his vanity by impressing the community, taking credit for your intellectual gifts and achievements. You learned this was the only way to gain his approval. (...)

(...)

If he could not castrate you physically, he had to make women appear treacherous and fearful to you. He could not impregnate a woman but he never gave up trying, he had hoped for a miracle somehow, sometime, that his worthless seed may sprout. So he needed women, but he hated them, because they confirmed over and over again his failure. Attraction and revulsion. He never analysed his behaviour for he had not goodwill or mercy in him. His vanity, based on what his idea of a "macho" man was centred on

⑦

relations with women especially procreation. His obsession with powerful firearms with potent ammunition also originates there. His deplorable relationship with his own mother, a cold hearted woman who could reduce a grown man to tears whenever he visited her, tells one a lot about his problems

(...)

You told me that when you found your adoption papers, you saw my name. This was a great shock to me - as I had been assured of anonymity. I had left my parents' home for the first time in my life to protect their reputation and had not confided my condition to anyone precisely for this reason! What a betrayal! To find that this monster has known who I was and who my parents were (see History for Investigation form) for all those years sent a chill down my spine! (I wonder about the possibility of blackmail) You told me on those papers, that my address

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was shown as the same as the adoptive parents!
It is a pity that I had never even been in, was a double shock! When you saw this you say, you knew your adoptive mother was not your birth mother. However you assumed that he, the adoptive father, was probably your birth father, since I was falsely shown as residing at their address. This made me feel ill. No wonder the physical characteristics, colouring of eyes, hair etc were the main preoccupation of the "social worker" regarding the birth father. I was even told these details were not given at the "interview" (interrogation)

On obtaining the document "History for Investigation" it clearly shows that I gave the name, age and occupation of the birth father which had been earlier denied in correspondence I received from Old Dept of Family Services. They claimed if I gave "matching" information "it appears it has since been lost or destroyed" "possibly in 1974 floods or culled". These adoptive parents had rejected several babies offered to them prior to adopting my son, so important was it to them that characteristics matched. He wanted people to be totally duped into thinking he was fertile.

This misinformation regarding the address can be easily disproven since I still have work references I can produce to account for my whereabouts. I have never met either of these individuals. I went directly from the convent (...) into hospital for

(9)

the birth and for the period preceding that was living with my older sister hundreds of miles away from these people. I question the validity of the adoption documents.

Another questionable matter is the fact that the adoptive mother's maiden name corresponds to that of the Registrar who signed the amended birth certificate. This raises questions in my mind also as to whether the two may be related.

As well, the very strange behaviour of the medical superintendent at Brisbane Women's Hospital, where my son was born in the destruction of my medical records and attached "non-identifying letters" by the time I had secured the legal right to take possession of those records and letters. How these totally unfit and unstable people could ever have been given any child to care for beggars the imagination. I feel I am owed an explanation from the authorities responsible as to why my baby was given over to such a violent, abusive environment.

When I was recovering from the birth and episiotomy, a woman approached me who I now know to be an inspector from the Old State Children's Dept. Her name is unknown to me as she did not introduce herself and her signature on the Consent to Adoption Order is illegible. I gave birth at 7.05pm on (...) 5/58 but was admitted some 24 hrs earlier in labour before being confined. This woman visited me on (...) 5/58.

I had been moved to a large public ward, totally without privacy, not even curtains drawn around, in full view of all, which restricted my right even to speak. Surrounded by mothers nursing their babies, this woman stood at the foot of the bed, speaking in a loud voice within earshot of all with an imperious air of authority. I was flat on my back, a ray lamp between my legs drying my stitches, with her towering over me asking many questions about the physical characteristics of the birth father.

She merely asked me to sign a paper without explaining anything to me whatsoever in the way of rights or benefits available. Nor did she mention my right to revoke consent. I just wanted her to stop the public humiliation and exposure. I was traumatised by the harrowing experience of the birth, on medication and vulnerable. Nobody else was present with her or ever came near me. How could this be a legal document without even a witness to my signature? What right did they have to deny my child to me? What right did they have to bind my breasts immediately after the birth and put me on Stilboestrol to dry up my milk before I had signed a consent to adoption? One of the first things my son said to me on reunion was "I didn't get my milk!"

I was used, my child was used. They took my son from me under false pretences. My son

(11)

was snatched by the state! I was thrown out onto the scrap heap, with a supply of stilboestrol discharged on (...) 15/58. When I asked where my baby was I was told he was already adopted. I found out many years later that he was still in the hospital and was not handed to the adoptive parents until (...) 15/58. How he must have been fretting all those days. No wonder he had all his life - primary ontological insecurity!

On discharge I crawled back home with no counselling, no comfort, silenced to cope as best I could. My sister got married on (...) 6/58 and I was forced to be bridesmaid and hide my sorrow. Numbed for years and years, dead emotionally, stripped of my self respect and there for anyone to exploit in whatever way it suited them. Sent back out into the world bruised, damaged, violated and traumatised. Milk streaming from my breasts, my body and mind prepared to care for and nurture a baby just brutally squashed and blocked. My whole system in shock.

Returning to my parents' home, having to cope with haemorrhaging and clots intermittently coming away. I had to have a curette and the doctor told me afterbirth had been sewn up inside me. I never had any other children and never intended to marry. When I was pregnant, at 7½ months I was admitted to hospital immediately being severely

anaemic. At (...) for one week, on the first visit to Brisbane Women's Hospital to the antenatal clinic, they admitted me due to the small weight and size of my baby. It was after I was given a blood transfusion that the doctor told me that they had never given a transfusion to a woman so advanced in pregnancy.

The result of this was a very rapid growth of the child within me and I being of slight build, this caused great difficulty at the birth. His weight was 9 lbs. 10 ozs. My normal weight was $7\frac{1}{2}$ stone! So not only was I cut about and ^{had} numerous stitches, but was left with the legacy of very numerous and noticeable stretch marks and flaccid abdominal skin. This required plastic surgery, an abdominal apron operation. As well, the fact that I was unable to breast feed my baby meant my uterus was not quickly or easily repositioned. All of these problems and others were the result of an experimental blood transfusion.

For years and years, I studied little boys on the street, going to school, travelling on buses, shopping with their "families", riding their bikes, playing sport. Mentally calculating their age, searching for physical characteristics that were familiar to me. I never for one single day of my life, since my son was born, ever stopped looking for, or fretting for, him. No relationship could make me forget or compensate

for my loss or make me happy. Nothing in life was worthwhile for I had lost the greatest prize possible. I envied Niobe of Greek legend who wept so much for her slain children that she turned to stone. I could not turn to stone and stop the pain, instead I became a sleep walker through life. I was of no value, so was to be treated by others as such. I did not deserve anything and could not trust anyone. If I had no respect for myself how could I expect or want anyone to respect me? It was all so unnecessary and unimportant anyway, just vain and trite.

When I was 34 (15 yrs later) I was studying singing. Music attracted me, as it gave expression to my feelings where words failed me and were totally inadequate. I met a man who I married. He appealed to me because his mother had left him in a convent when he was three years old and never returned. He waited every Sunday at the gate for her to return, in vain. He was when she could not continue to pay the fees, made a ward of the state and thence abused in every way in a succession of foster homes.

He was a pianist and an alcoholic. He played the sadist on me, the substitute mother and I relieved my masochism on him, my substitute child. Seven years of this unconscious self-inflicted physical, mental abuse and humiliation caused me to hit "rock bottom" emotionally, then

start the long hard climb back up.

On divorcing my husband, I felt I had won a victory over myself and because I had been so severely abused, felt I was strong enough to cope with any situation. I came out of this catastrophe to take up with a man who was not a drinker, but through divorce, had been separated from his infant son. Once again, I identified with his pain and loss, so he proceeded to make the most of the opportunity, beat and abused me, sober, with more regularity and more viciously than my husband. Because of involvement with him in business where I had invested my assets, it was 15 years before I managed to liberate myself completely from him. As a consequence of my developing cancer and being considered more of a liability than an asset, he released me, went to live with another woman, who he had, unbeknownst to me, made pregnant. I shall forever be indebted to her for now I could see the pattern of my behaviour and finally search for my son.

Separate and apart from the psychological, emotional, physical and financial damage suffered as a consequence of the adoption, my sexual life has been one of passivity and inability to trust anyone ever again. My energy and efforts were concentrated on helping my son achieve integrity, so he could stand on his feet before I pass away. For his sake and my grandson who should not pay for the crime committed against us 52 years ago. My son found peace and joy in the last

two years and I discovered beneath that complex and confused exterior what a beautiful, sensitive person he was. When he passed away suddenly in November, peacefully in his sleep, all those close to him were devastated. I still have not come to terms with his passing. It seems so unfair that just when the future looked so promising, his life was cut short.

My son wept like a child when he looked in my prayer book, curious about the old holy pictures I still had from that time in the convent when I was pregnant with him. His eyes had fallen on this, which had unmistakable significance for us:—

Epistle: GAL IV. 1-7 (Sunday within the octave of Christmas)
 "Brethren. As long as the heir is a child, he differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all, but is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed by the father. So we also, when we were children, were serving under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of time was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law that He might redeem them who were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying: Abba, Father. Therefore now he is not a servant, but a son, and if a son, an heir also through God."

The significance of "to redeem those also under the law" became apparent to me, for I knew I had to summon the strength to lodge this submission, not only for myself but also for my late departed son. Being a barrister and a perfectionist, I'm sure he would have prepared a submission that would have been noteworthy.

However please make allowances for the fact that I am now 72 years of age. "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak". This will be my "swan song" a memorial to my son. Hopefully this will be the last time I will be called upon to rake over these most painful memories. I am living testimony to the fact that the pain never goes away.

My son asked of me explanations for his condition. In turn, I ask the State and the Law of the Commonwealth, to prevent continuation of the ongoing misery and suffering. Do not part the child from the mother. It seems amazing in retrospect, that a young girl (in 1958) was not considered mature enough to vote or even in those days, to take out a hire purchase agreement without a guarantor, was considered aware enough to realise the consequences of adoption for herself and her child. Where does contract Law stand in this regard? My son, the barrister would have been able to enlighten us as he specialised in commercial Law. Perhaps what is required is legal representation before a consent to Adoption Order is signed, so that the mother is informed of her rights.

Lorraine M. Griffith

SYDNEY - 30/1/2011

"Senate's inquiry into Commonwealth contribution to
former forced adoption policies and practices"

PART II

re: (...) convent of St Mary's Laundry
 ↓ (in 1958)
Woolloowen Brisbane Qld

Lorraine / M6 Griffiths:

Sydney 30/1/2011

PART II

SYDNEY 30th May 2011 ①

re: HOLY CROSS, WOOLLOOWIN BRIS QLD

Two days after my 19th birthday, on the (...) 1958, I gave birth to a son in Brisbane Women's Hospital (...) Having been ambulated from (...) Convent at Woolloowin, where I had been residing, out of necessity for eleven weeks (since (...) 158). This is a brief account of the dehumanising treatment I received at the hands of those upon whom I had depended, and expected from, in my vulnerability, consideration, support and respect for my rights as an Australian citizen.

The whole episode was more akin to ritual abuse which traumatised me for most of my life, "numbing" me emotionally and leaving me with a permanent distrust of the governments of this country, the medical profession and religious organisations. Notwithstanding, painful as it is to relive the events, I feel it is my responsibility to relate my experience so that others may not have to endure such grief and inhumanity. If I chose to remain silent, the truth would not be known and I become an accomplice in the continuation of such barbarism.

I was born in Sydney on 1/5/1939 into a comfortable middle class family. My father was self-employed and I was the seventh of eight children. After four years of boarding school, I was a day pupil at a private Catholic college in the Eastern Suburbs for four years. At this time, my mother (who was 28 years younger than my father) approaching menopause, began

(2)

deteriorating emotionally and suffered a complete nervous breakdown for which she was hospitalised. My father took me out of school to keep house and care for my younger brother so that he could continue his education. These adverse events left me emotionally vulnerable. I had led rather a protected, sheltered life and was ignorant and naive in the ways of the world, especially in matters sexual. Such matters were never discussed in the home or the schools I attended, being considered sinful "impure" thoughts.

I was exploited by a man of dubious background who was very knowing in this regard. After three months, sometime in (...) 1957, I fell pregnant. When I appealed to this man for assistance, he tried to take advantage by proposing a life of prostitution for me, under his management. I realised I was on my own. My father was 74 years of age, my youngest brother was 15, my mother was emotionally unstable. When my older sister sent me a plane ticket to go to Brisbane to help her prepare for her coming marriage, planned for June 1958, I grabbed it with both hands. I had never before lived away from home, except at boarding school.

After arriving in Brisbane in October 1957, I gained employment as a wages clerk / Ledgerkeeper for a tailoring firm in Queen Street and continued to work for as long as possible as my "condition" did not show. My baby was small as also was my physical build. Working did not enable me to accumulate any financial support as my sister took every penny I earned.

About three weeks before I left employment (on (...) 12/58), my sister was threatening to call a doctor because I was getting leg cramps during the night and suffered from abnormal thirst. As I had not confided my condition to anyone, nor had I seen a medical practitioner, I panicked lest my sister, and subsequently my family, discovered my secret.

I visited the outpatients' department of Brisbane Women's Hospital and was examined by a doctor. When he confirmed my pregnancy, I broke down in tears and asked if he could suggest some refuge I could go to for the rest of my term. When I rang his office the next day, his secretary gave me the names of three institutions. Since I was at that time, a fervent Catholic (brainwashed and institutionalised from my boarding school days) and the only place available of that denomination was (...) Convent I rang them. Since I had just received confirmation of my pregnancy and the reality of it was so overwhelming, the thought of what to do when the baby was born was something I had not considered at all at that stage, I was not even aware of my options.

When I spoke on the 'phone to the Mother Superior (Mother Clare?) there was no mention of adoption (...) at all. When I had secured a place at

I gave notice at work, and left early that last Friday. I hurried to the flat I shared with my sister, packed my few belongings, left a note saying I was returning home to Sydney, caught a taxi

to Woolloomooloo, leaving before my sister arrived home (to relieve me of my pay packet). I had burned my bridges behind me and was totally at the "mercy" of [...] (...). I was in their hands.

As I sat on the opposite side of Mother Superior's desk it was then that she informed me that only girls whose babies were for adoption were offered shelter there. When I began to voice my concerns and express my hope that I may be able to keep my baby, her "benign" attitude disappeared and she began to accuse me of being selfish, of being incapable of looking after my child. She said if I really cared for my child, I would want it to have a "normal" life and not to be stigmatised by illegitimacy. This undermining of my self-confidence, "moral" coercion and the reality that I had no other place to go but the street, forced me to agree (temporarily, I thought) to the conditions. No documents were signed, this was merely a conversation.

Instead of a refuge, I found it to be a sinister penal institution, a money-making steam laundry exploiting the free labour of three groups of females—firstly, disabled (physically, mentally) secondly, so-called "uncontrollable" girls (some of very early age) and thirdly, "unmarried mothers". These severely disturbed females all worked together, an eight hour day, ate together, but fortunately, the "unmarried mothers" (approximately 25) had their own dormitory. This concession I realise now, was not for our welfare, but to ensure the precious cargoes we carried were not

lost as lesbianism was rife in the other dormitories. We heard whispers in the laundry about the sexual assaults that took place at night. Fights erupted almost on a daily basis as a result of this deplorable state. Once I found myself between two combatants in a passageway and feared that an ill-aimed blow would strike me, caught as I was between these two out of control females causing a miscarriage for me. I felt I had been dropped into Hell. Instead of finding a refuge and safety, I found myself in something more like a madhouse. I endured because I knew I would be leaving within a short time. God only knows how those long-term inmates coped and what became of them!

We were all given "aliases" supposedly to guarantee privacy. (In hindsight, I suspect this was to prevent us organising at some later date.) This proved false both in [...] and in the legal/adoption process. I was to discover in 1994 that the adoptive "parents" have always known who and where I was. (My son discovered his adoption papers in 1970 and became aware of my identity and name.) Privacy, however, was strictly maintained for them. Is this because it would only be natural for a mother to fret for her baby and seek it out, just as any other creature does? This in itself indicates that authorities have always known the grief the mother would sustain as a result of being deprived of her child.

(6)

When my sister started to search for me, since I failed to return to Sydney, and she contacted the (...) admitted immediately that I was there. Another total disregard for the rights of the individual, in this case, the right to privacy - as agreed. When one has been dehumanised and turned into an object, those in power over those "objects" are free to commit any atrocity, any indignity.

It happened that a spirited, rebellious, slightly-built girl of about 14 years of age with short, dark curly hair was missing for some days (one of the "uncontrollables"). One night as I came out of the refectory, coming up the passageway, were two burly policemen in uniform, holding the arms, between them this particular young girl, whose feet were dragging on the ground as she was unable to walk. As my gaze fell further down she had blood pouring between her legs. The bottom part of her body and clothing was soiled with old and fresh blood. She appeared to be semi-conscious. (...)

hurried onto the scene and chased us all away, she did by way of explanation, state the blood was "menstrual".

The story that began to circulate (emanating from (...)) was that this girl escaped somehow by crossing the roof, was found living under sheets of corrugated iron with several young fellows on a vacant block of land and returned by the police. The explanation of her appearance was that she had

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been having intercourse with these young men and was menstruating at the time. Now this sounded plausible, but it has always haunted me that this under-age young girl was delivered to (...) in such a condition without benefit of a medical examination or given the opportunity to cleanse herself.

The next morning, as I passed by the stairs, I heard a hissing noise, as though somebody wanted to attract my attention. Under the stairs, where the cavity was boarded up, a couple of small diamond-shaped ventilation holes were visible. I was surprised to discover that there was a type of cell a bit bigger than a broom closet, and even more surprised to find that somebody was presently occupying it! As I drew near, I recognised the girl the police had brought back the previous night. She was in distress and as I prepared to listen to what she wanted to tell me, (...) appeared and chased me away.

I have always suspected that this girl was taken away from (...) because she refused to have her spirit broken. I don't think she ran away but was taken away and made an example of. I think she was pack-raped. Maybe she still survives. I do hope so, I have never forgotten her and her humiliation. She was a ward of the state. Perhaps she has eventually had the opportunity to tell what was done to her.

The effect of all this brutality and inhumanity

(8)

was to wear away one's self-respect and create a climate of powerlessness, hopelessness, depression and fear. One feared to resist. It became more a matter of survival than anything else. Even now, so many years later, it is still extremely difficult to recall the experience so great was the oppression, humiliation, dehumanisation. It traumatised me.

Once a week, we "unmarried mothers" were transported by ambulance to the pre-natal clinic at Brisbane Womens' Hospital for check-up. The first time I was examined, I was immediately admitted to hospital as they told me. I was anaemic and urgently required a blood transfusion. I had nothing with me but a small purse, no personal effects. No underclothes, no toiletries, no comb, no toothbrush, no handkerchief. I lay in a curtained-off alcove of a ward for two weeks. Forbidden to speak to other patients (who were, in any case, some distance away) and totally ignored by the nursing and medical staff when I asked for a face washer, comb and toothbrush. I have never forgotten this humiliating treatment. I had sent messages to Mother Superior asking assistance, firstly, when I was admitted (per the other girls at clinic returning to the convent) and secondly per one of girls (alias "Phil") who was concerned enough to visit me in the ward. No response of any kind to either request.

I lay there, used as a specimen for student doctors to poke and prod at and to ask personal questions of. The "specialist" doctor (if that was what

(9)

He was never introduced himself to me. The only time he addressed me was to inform me that they had not before given a transfusion so late in pregnancy. Mine being the first means I was the guinea-pig! Seems odd now that my medical records that were in existence from 1958 until (...) 1992 (i.e. 34 years) were suddenly found to have been destroyed upon my asking for a copy in March 1994. At no time was I advised or informed as to procedures, possible adverse consequences, nor was my permission sought or granted. I was totally depersonalised, treated as a medical experiment.

When I was eventually discharged and returned to Holy Cross, I entered (...) 's office to find her using my portable radio (removed from my bedside). I was obliged to ask for the return of same. The result of the experimental blood transfusion was that my baby grew very large, very rapidly, much larger than my slight build could cope with. When born, my son weighed 9 lbs. 10 ozs. I had to have an episiotomy after many hours of labour. A letter from the hospital, before records were destroyed, states I was "confined" on (...) 1958 (the date of the birth). This is incorrect, I was actually admitted on (...) 1958 (LATE PM). I remember it vividly, for it was my own birthday and I worked all day in the steam laundry with the labour pangs increasing in intensity and frequency as the day wore on.

On arrival, alone, from (...) I was left to languish, seated on a bench near an Enquiry desk, late at night (near midnight) ignored and unattended, in labour,

for 1½ hours before finally being admitted to the labour ward and the presence of others from which I derived some comfort, other patients that is!

During labour I was subjected to insulting personal remarks by both the Sister and Nurse on duty. It was like it was "open season" on the unmarried mothers from [...] (...) I begged the doctors not to cut me, I was terrified, as I had been warned at [...] (...) that unmarried mothers were cut about unnecessarily since there was nobody to look after their interests or protect them.

Finally, they gave me an injection (without asking or informing me) I lost consciousness and they proceeded to take my child. After some time I have no idea how long, I regained consciousness. I awoke to find a medical team at work on the lower part of my body. I could not see what was going on as my view was obstructed by either a pillow or sheet. I could make out on the right side lying across my groin, like a large purplish blood vessel which I assumed was the umbilical cord. Alarmed at proceedings, I spoke, asking what was happening to me. Nobody spoke as they all looked towards me unemotionally, indifferently, nobody reassured me. Somebody gave me another injection (without permission) and I lost consciousness again.

The next time I awoke, my legs were strapped apart and a doctor with a little white

cap was stitching me up. When he had completed his work, I called for the nurse and asked for my baby. She told me I had a son, how much he weighed, that he was a beautiful baby who was going to make "someone else" very happy. I asked to see him and she replied: "you can't see it. This baby is for adoption."

At this stage, straight after the birth she was denying me my legal right of access to my child. I had not signed anything, had not yet finally decided what to do. I still hoped for a miracle. Also my breasts were bound and I was given Stilboestrol tablets to stop milk production. I discovered the intention behind these actions at a later date. At that stage, they were carried out without my consent and without informing me of the consequences. They had already decided for me that my baby was to be denied his mother's milk.

When I pleaded to see my son, the nurse went away. Some time later she returned with my baby in her arms and stood by the side of my bed. She stated that the doctor had granted me "permission" to see my child briefly (who gave him authority over my child?)

My baby was covered in a white creamy-like substance. I realised later that he still had not been cleaned up from the birth. As I reached forward to touch his little hand, to reassure him and

welcome him to the world, to study his fingers, she pulled away as though I were a leper. "You can't touch this baby, it is for adoption!" Then she said: "Anyway, by giving him up, you have paid your debt to Society." I have never forgotten those cruel, sadistic words. They found a way to contaminate even that one, tiny, precious and beautiful moment we had. As I looked at this young woman, only a few years older than I, wearing an engagement ring on her finger, I felt pity for the man she was to marry since she was so lacking in compassion. I wondered why she was in that line of work. The hospital system would be better off without such hard-hearted persons.

There I lay, exhausted by the birth, traumatised at having my baby snatched from my womb against my will, dehumanised, in a public ward among all the "married mothers" feeding their babies. The torture and degradation had to be reinforced and maximised. Part of the "softening up" process to render me passive no doubt! In a day or two, my sister, who had braced me to

(...) turned up and when she tried to see my baby, they denied her as well, on the grounds that my baby was for adoption.

Shortly after the birth, and it could only have been a matter of days, for I was still unable to walk, I was lying on my back, legs apart with a ray lamp under the sheets drying my numerous

stitches, when the "Social Worker" arrived. An imperious looking woman with a swept back hair style and a very stern expression stood at the foot of my bed and began to interrogate me in a loud voice as though I was a criminal. Who knows what her name was? She never condescended to inform me, but she was alone and very aggressive. There was no witness. She fired questions at me for all to hear in the ward. Her interest seemed to be predominantly in the colouring of the natural father, hair, eyes, complexion etc. My embarrassment was huge, exposed as I was, in front of strangers, stripped of privacy, grieving for my baby, powerless being forced to discuss matters that were too intimate for me to raise even with my own parents.

All I wanted was for this public humiliation and harassment to stop and for her to go away. I had no idea what my rights or entitlements were or even that there were benefits available. She told me nothing except where to sign. I had no idea that I was to suffer all my life because of the loss of my only child. As it eventuated, he was adopted to child abusers and he also became the scapegoat, the whipping boy. Our reunion, which took place in April, 1994 is another story in itself and I cry every day because of what has been done to us.

The whole experience of. (...) and the

Brisbane Women's Hospital, what happened to my son and I, has left me with the overwhelming sensation of having fallen into the evil clutches of some organised child-trafficking cult of some kind. The coercive, sinister, dictatorial methods employed, the withholding of information of a positive nature that may have provided an alternative, true supportive course of action, the false facade of caring and support whilst inflicting knowingly, irrevocable injury on mother and child. The isolation, brainwashing, indoctrination and exploitation — these are CULTIC methods. Oppressive and undemocratic, in short, the denial of human rights.

There is also the incidence of abuse of our spirituality which caused the destruction of my religious belief in the Catholic Church and so-called "Christianity" in general. What massive heresy! A priest a Redemptorist one

came to "retreat" (...) to hear confession during a (...) was as excited as a young girl, running into the parlour with a bottle of beer on a tray. Very odd behaviour, I thought. What happened in the confessional box was even more surprising. Already laden down with guilt and shamed, we had this "priest" persisting and harping on sexual desire. "Did one feel like having sex? What did one think of when desiring sex? Did one feel like having sex now?" All very

unexpected, strange and frightening. The private refuge - the spiritual, was assailed, assaulted. It was only because one brave girl in indignation, exclaimed how disgusting her confession was, that we swapped information and discovered that under the "confidentiality" of the confessional, he had abused us all. Part of the overall coercive strategy of undermining our integrity I am sure. I for one, have never been to Confession since.

So drugged to the eyeballs, given a supply of Stilboestrol tablets to dry up my milk, I was discharged on (...) 15/1958 according to the documents. When I enquired after my baby, the nurse told me he had already been taken home by the "adoptive parents". Only recently have I discovered that he was not handed to them until (...) 15/1958. He lay in the hospital nursery for 17 days, probably screaming his head off - no wonder the records show they painted his throat with gentian violet. The bitterest of substances to try and shut him up? No wonder he is, as an adult, plagued by anxiety attacks!

The whole birth and adoption experience for both my son and myself, has been horrific and we still carry the pain and grief. In spite of this, and due entirely to his own determination to prove himself by excelling, he is a barrister. This is not a success story. On the executive level,

professionally, he is competent, emotionally, he is dysfunctional, damaged and insecure, unable to trust. He said to me "Mum, I feel I have been the victim of some bizarre socio-medico experiment gone wrong." For myself, my impression, (one that I have carried and will continue to do so) is of having awakened at his birth, to find "doctors" performing an autopsy on me while I was still alive! In a sense, this is true, for both my child and I were "existentially killed for the State", suffering a kind of "death in life", emotionally and spiritually traumatised. It was an evil, unnatural act. We are still trying to recover a fraction of what was taken so violently, so inhumanely, all those years ago, ourselves, our humanity, our dignity. As he said to me, "Thank God, we are both still alive."

As you can appreciate, having to write this account is extremely painful. My instinct is to run from the horror and withdraw into myself, which was expected of us, to remain silent in our grief and violation and never accuse our abusers. Two further "irregularities" bear investigation: When my son was 12, the adoptive "mother" died in suspicious circumstances (an autopsy was performed). Shortly after two years or so, the adoptive "father" was admitted to hospital for removal of a brain tumour. During this time, my son found his adoption papers and discovered the woman he had

been grieving for over two years was not, in fact, his real mother. He saw my name on the papers and also my supposed address.

The adoptive "parents" were at that time living in [...] Old, where they had a garage. My address on the adoption papers (according to my son) was shown as the same as their address in [...]. This is completely false information. I was residing at [...] convent during and after my pregnancy and had never been in [...] ever.

I had never left my family home in Sydney prior to my pregnancy and thereafter, had never been further north than Brisbane. My son said he knew then, that the adoptive "mother" was not his birth mother, but because the address shown for me (on the documents) was the same as theirs, then the adoptive "father" was probably his birth father. It has taken me years to convince them that I have never ever met these people who are now both deceased. The lies live on. I have a hope that these official documents will be either ruled invalid, or at least, amended to reflect the truth.

The second "irregularity" or "oddity" concerns the maiden name - of the adoptive "mother" i.e.

(...) Is it just coincidence that the 1958 Brisbane Registrar of my son's Birth Certificate (both the original and amended adoption copies) was an individual by the name of [...]

Can I discover if these two individuals are related? Why was my son given to child abusers?

...

Hopefully, an Inquiry by the Old government may unearth similarities that will give us some answers.

When I returned to Sydney in June '58, after my sister's wedding, I began to experience haemorrhaging, passing of large clots from my ^{me} vagina. I consulted my family G.P. who admitted to Famenoth Private Hospital and performed a burette on me to remove, as he described, large amounts of afterbirth that had been sewn up inside me.

I also required cosmetic surgery, an abdominal apron operation, to remove the large amount of loose, flaccid folds of stretch-marked skin that hung from my lower body. This was the consequence of having had a blood transfusion so late in pregnancy, resulting in the formation of a baby much larger than nature intended, growing at a rapid rate, causing a difficult birth and mutilation of myself. I won't dwell on the medical and psychological damage done to my son and I in this account. I have formed the opinion it is a pointless exercise, something that can only be understood by those who have

experienced it and are fortunate enough not to have been destroyed by it.

Violence at the hands of the State, or the Church, or those who are last refuge, develops a particular type of cynicism which can only produce revolutionaries, or at the very least, law reform, since "justice" is an empty word (we know it is an illusion and therefore, unattainable). There has to be a cessation, a stop to this callous disregard for the rights of others for the day arrives when the victims outnumber the Perpetrators.

(Ms.) Lorraine M. Griffith.

(...)

30th January 2011