

See attached impact statement I forwarded on to Sisters of Mercy. I have received a personal apology from them. And also the WA adoption Apology on the 19th Oct 2011. I am a Natural Mother and my booklet telling a bit about my own story was released on 19th Oct. I sent the prime minister a copy of this, but haven't had a reply as yet. If you would like me to send you also a copy just let me know. I am putting my voice to all states and the Federal Government to follow WA lead and also to now do the only decent a honoured thing and apology too asap. Saying Sorry does make a different I know that as I have experienced it first hand.

Could you let me know you received this email and attachment and have read it. Consider it my submission.

Yours Truly,  
Ms Judith Hendriksen.

## My Impact Statement, Addressed to Mercy Care 2009

It has taken me nearly 35 years to finally rid myself completely, of my supposed shame and guilt.

Some things I have never forgotten, and strangely as the years have unfolded I am remembering more and more, of the abuse perpetrated on me, that is why I'm now writing my story.

I have however been speaking my truth, of the abuse perpetrated on me, for some time. And a friend of mine and I were on the 7.30 report over twenty years ago. But it seemed the powers that be then would not listen to us. I kept my secret of the fact that I had a baby out of wedlock, mainly to myself for 13 years, apart from telling my then future husband.

These then are the facts as I recall them and experienced them, and although not always clear on dates in some of the below statements, they are I believe true and correct, as some people may disagree and say that I was so traumatized then, how will we know its true. I can tell more face to face to, this just a few facts.

1. My mother and I went to a doctor country town, and happened to be Catholic we are not, after I was pregnant about 4 months, may have been even more. He said adoption is the only thing in a situation like this it being the right and best decision for both baby and Mother. While I looked on in

shock. No one ever asked me what I wanted. And never during my pregnancy and after birth either was adoption ever discussed with me EVER, I was simply told. He also highly praised (...)  
unmarried Mothers Home, (...) I think. My Mum just agreed so my parents in affect Left me there.

2. I think it was on my arrival that a Nun said to me, I should go pray in the chapel for my sin, that being having had sex outside of marriage. Even now as I'm typing this, I find it almost unbelievable that most days I actually did do that.
3. About two weeks before my first born a daughter was born, I approached a Nun and stated. I do not want my baby adopted out. I was lectured firmly and told, there are many deserving infertile married christian couples that have everything a baby could want, you have nothing. You can go have a baby of your own when you get married. I was even called selfish for ever thinking such an idea. I do clearly remember this. My whole experience from the start was I was to supply a deserving couple with my precious baby.
4. Never did any Nun refer to my baby as my baby.
5. I was told so many lies, and I just believed them all, how would I have known any better then being this scared vulnerable alone 16 and 17 year old.
6. Now I want justice for my younger self, who was denied, all human rights.

During the years I have always said my first born was taken from me for adoption, have always stated and said

I had no choice. As I have become stronger within self I have said she was taken illegally from me, that being truth again but now I say she was stolen from me, which is even closer to the truth. And if I was to choose another word other than stolen to describe it, would be “Raped” of my daughter, apart from the obvious meaning of that word it also includes these, to rob, abuse, despoil, maltreat, devastate, pillage, a capturing or snatching by force.

I very nearly lost my life over this one, which I would rather speak in person than type here. I was in so much pain and grief although didn't know then it was grief do now, I attempted suicide about two years after my first born's birth, born on my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday 11-9-1973.

Sadly my daughter wants nothing to do with me, again would rather talk this out in person, not state here. This is another story in itself.

After birth, but not sure of exact times six month period or 2 years later on. But sure this did happen. I was still hiding myself in my parents home. Was too scared to venture out, so even though not pregnant then, must have felt the shame still. My parents didn't know what to do with me. I often would go outside, but only at night, and I recall walking in my pyjamas looking everywhere under trees, bushes, even searched in the neighbor's garden, walking up our street in small country town searching for my BABY>. I did this at least half a dozen times, one night my Dad come out and asked what the hell I was doing I said looking for my baby. I know she's here somewhere, this truly did happen. I know its sound weird but it is truth. *Again was simply put on medication*

*For the first 13 years I didn't have any counseling, understanding from even one person either medical or families support. Just told to forget, and get on with my life.*

*Many years later, but after suicide attempt I rang <sup>(...)</sup>  
 . And feel it was <sup>(...)</sup> who I spoke  
with. Asking how my baby was, She didn't have current  
news but said as a baby she was very happy and much  
loved by her parents. I didn't know for 15 years if she  
was in fact dead or alive. But I never stopped trying.  
And in the end hired someone too find her.  
The sister said quite rudely too, I'm concerned you are  
still upset after all this time, and you have other children  
to cherish. Be assured that you made your decision and  
should learn to live with it. I then replied what decision I  
never made one. Then was told I swear this is all true.  
Was told in the days of the bible you should have been  
stoned for what you did, sex outside of marriage of  
course. In tears I replied yes, and in the days of the bible  
you CRUCIFIED me like they did to Christ.*

*Also in 1973 I was told as a minor I had no rights. All  
lies now I know. I should have been able to see my baby,  
and I did ask on three different days. And I was denied  
each time. I was leaking milk from my breasts when I  
requested they take me to my baby. Told again it is not  
your baby. The nun told me to stay there, and she came  
back with a binder, which she put tightly around my  
breasts and given, tablets too, that I was told to dry my  
milk up. I also believe that I was drugged so I wouldn't  
cause any problems for them, by asking to see my baby  
etc. The last time I asked to see my baby before*

leaving (...) , was told yet again it is not YOUR BABY, you have your whole life in front of you. Just get on with your life and forget it. I felt dead inside on leaving my precious baby behind the day my Dad came to take me home.

And I now want justice for my younger self, and my first born, but not just for me, but all. This must never ever happen to any one ever again, either here or overseas.

This is not about money. Even though I still to this day can't work full time, due to health. And do struggle financially being on a Disability Support Pension and, paying off a house etc, and work part time too. Even if I was offered all the money in the world it could never make up for the loss of my daughter.

Also some time between my first borns birth in 1973, and my second bore 1979. I had two phantom pregnancies I was convinced I was pregnant and went to two doctors. And said I know I'm pregnant I just know I am. And had I been I could tell you no one yes no one would be stealing yet another baby off me for adoption, they would have to kill me first. And the weird thing is I hadn't had sex with anyone, to get pregnant. No one thought to ask if I had had sex. Just goes to show how my brain was operating, on this one

Thanking you for hearing my story, there is a lot more, this is only a few points. I trust Truth, and justice will finally prevail, and at the very least I want a sincere apology.

