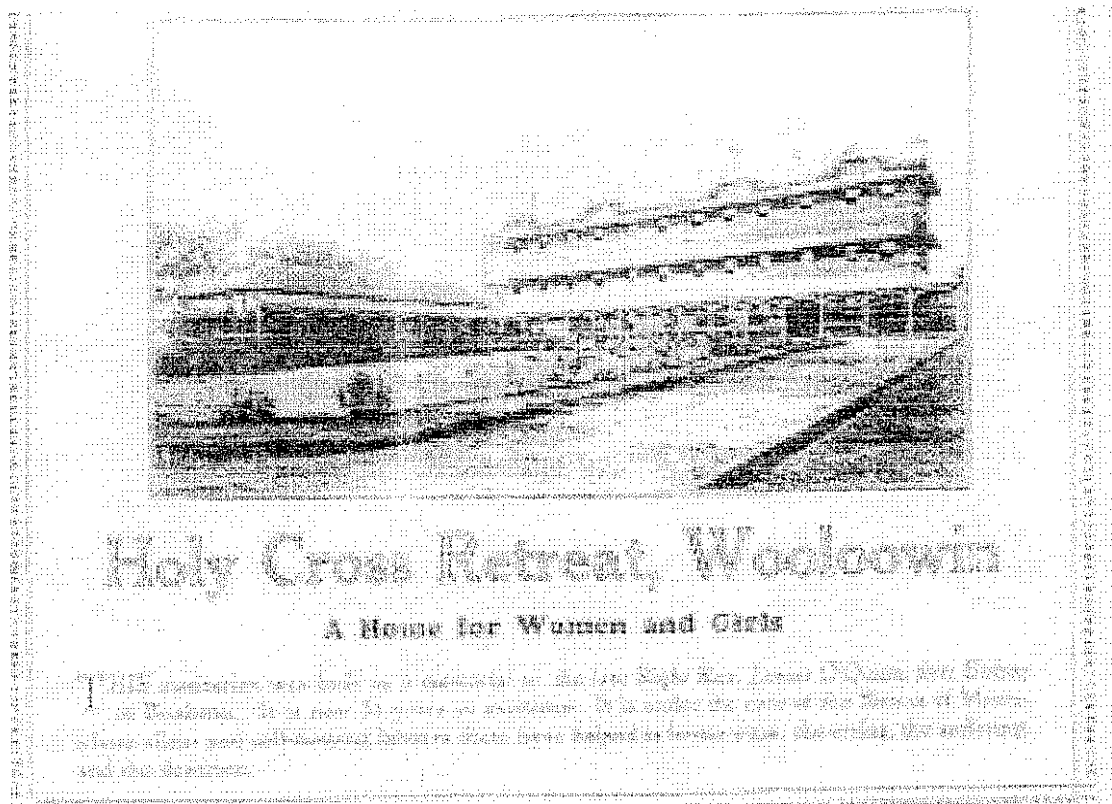


Submission to Senate Inquiry into Child Abuse in Institutions

State-wardship and Unlawful Adoption Practices in Queensland



Submitted by Lily Arthur Former State Ward of
Queensland. Mother of a child abducted by the
State of Queensland. Secretary of Origins Inc
Supporting People Separated by Adoption.



To the Senate Committee on the Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care

Please find enclosed a number of articles in relation to unlawful adoption in Queensland. I am only addressing this state as people in other states will put in their own submission. The adoption practices in other states parallel that of Queensland and NSW

I have included some of my experience as merely an illustration, and am not asking for the committee to adjudicate on my experience as the matter is before the courts. I would like to make comment on the difficulties associated with means of claiming damages by pursuing legal action.

To date no-one has gotten over the Statutes of Limitations 2 test cases so far have failed for a number of reasons. In my case I was instructed from not seeking damages for the matters of my false arrest, imprisonment, trespass, and the theft of my child because it was conveyed to me that because I took too long to bring an action and that I would be barred by the limitations argument because the State could not defend itself against the multiple heads of damage, and I would be penalised by the court by bringing such an action. In other words they could penalise me for the many crimes committed to me by the state.

I am now seeking damages as a result of the mental health damage I since sustained at the knowledge of finding out that my son's theft was unlawful.

I would add here, the insult being that the state brought in its own legislation to cover up their crimes and then when FOI legislation was brought in under the 1990 Adoption Information Act, the State then amended it to still cover up their crimes under the contact/information objections sec 39 Adoption of Children Act

It has made me physically and mentally sick at the fact that the State and its agents can do what it likes to you and then get away with it because "it happened so long ago."

As a person who has contributed to 3 Parliamentary Inquiries into these issues namely NSW Adoption Inquiry, Tasmanian Adoption Inquiry and the Forde Inquiry I would like it noted that each Inquiry has failed to provide a satisfactory outcome for the person who have contributed to them.

The NSW Inquiry found adoption practices to be unlawful and unethical. After a 2 and a half year sitting of the committee the final report was launched on the last day of parliament at 4 pm on the Friday afternoon giving Origins inc who called for the Inquiry little opportunity to respond.

There was very little media coverage for such a serious issues in relation to the human rights abuses and criminal actions of those involved in adoption practices. The attitude of the Carr Government has been contemptible in that it has deliberately ignored the criminal actions of government and non government department workers.

The Government has neither acknowledged, apologised nor made any gesture toward providing compensation, accountability, redress or restitution to 86, 000 women who lost their children in this state to it's unlawful practices.

To date the now Minister Ms Tebbut and her predecessor Ms Lo-Po has not responded to requests to meet with our organisation to address the outcome of the Inquiry and the ramifications of the major mental health issues in relation to adoption practices, nor have our requests for funding for our organisation been granted.

The arrogance of the government was reflected in the comments by a Labour parliamentarian when asked for funding to help with the cost for the recent First National Conference on the Aspects Mental Health of Persons Affected by Family Separation (held in Sydney Oct 10-11 2002) his response was "why should we fund a conference like this, you will only make these people better and they will sue us, why don't they get on with it" This statement was made in front of a full branch meeting where I was ridiculed by those who thought that people like me were "just after money"

I might add that the majority of those in attendance were mostly of ethnic origin, which goes to show that the attitudes shown by the past and present governments to the Aboriginal Stolen Generation and others have rubbed off onto people who do not have a long association with the history of this country.

The Tasmanian Inquiry was a total whitewash with the committee failing to follow it's own terms of reference, and not acknowledging nor ruling on the common law principles of the terms of reference, in relation to whether unlawful or unethical adoption practices took place, even though submissions indicated this to be the case.

The Forde Inquiry although it went some way to addressing the issues of abuse did not cover the theft of the children of state wards as their experience occurred out side of the institutions. The Government has provided limited services and those who live outside the metropolitan area are basically ignored.

There is a trust fund of just over 2 million dollars that was set up by the government to date the churches involved in the abuse of it's ex-residents has failed to contribute any significant financial contribution to the trust. Ex-residents have to compete and justify why they need the most basic of services

I would like to comment that the persons and agencies and the churches have not been contrite about their part in this shameful episode nor have they been made financially responsible for the crimes committed against children.

I believe that government funding to these institutions should be curtailed and the money distributed to govt, non- religious institutions agencies and support groups etc to enable the persons affected by the systemic abuse to be treated by person not responsible for their mental health, pain and suffering.

In Conclusion

I am pleading on behalf of all those who have and will contribute to this Inquiry, please do not dismiss, water down or justify what has happened to people such as myself for the sake of Governments, churches etc. Please see these abuses for what they were.....crimes against children.

Please recommend that people are entitled to justice through the criminal justice system, court process etc. In my opinion If you do not make recommendations for a formal apology, services and changes of legislation to be provided to those affected, you may as well send them a gun and bullets and let them put themselves out their misery. As I said earlier this is the 4th Parliamentary Inquiry I have submitted to, and to date I have still have not received any impression that people like myself are worthy of what everyone takes for granteddignity and justice

Signed

**Lily Arthur
Secretary Origins Inc**

They changed my name, and made me a slave, and then stole my baby

Joanna Hawkins



Lily Arthur says she was imprisoned in a Magdalene laundry in Queensland and pulled to the United Kingdom in 1957. She was 16 years old at the time. The photograph was taken in the 1950s.

ON A sunny afternoon three weeks ago, Lily Arthur sat in a Sydney court house, looking at the judge and the jury. She was washing an advance screening of *The Magdalene Sisters*, a moving drama based on the true experiences of three young women forced into slave labour in Ireland's notorious Magdalene laundries in the 1950s.

The laughter she can be heard on the streets of the Sydney suburb of Merry on behalf of the Catholic Church. Thousands of young girls disappeared to empty convents, many of them to empty convents, many of them to empty convents, many of them to empty convents.

Arthur's son was washed through their hair and their bodies exchanged for one, perhaps a word or two, but they were not really speaking to one another.

For Arthur, some of those film scenes were particularly familiar. "I was shown also the mother superior's office and given two white dresses and a pair of shoes."

While Scottish director Peter Mulvan's powerful film moved many who saw it that afternoon, for Arthur it had a particular poignancy. The Magdalene laundries weren't founded to treat the poor, Arthur found out the hard way. She was sent to a Magdalene laundry in Woodroffe, Queensland, in 1957.

"Suddenly, I was back there again," says Arthur, now 53. "When I saw the girls in the film holding sheets after sheet, I was back in the laundry. I could see myself standing there all day, waiting for my turn to be washed."

Arthur's ordeal began in February 1957. The 16-year-old had just found out she was pregnant, but planned to marry the father, Steve, whom she was washing and in Brisbane. "I'd gone to bed but he about 10 o'clock, I was woken by two men who came in and said, 'You were expelled as a slave'."

The terrified teenager appeared before the Children's Court the next day. She was returned to her mother, but she was not allowed to see Steve. Steve was taken to the Australian mother of the Sisters of Mercy, while the court tried to track down her mother and step-

father who recently had moved from Brisbane to Sydney.

Four days later and with no sign of her parents Arthur found herself back at the court where she was committed to Holy Cross for an indefinite period. "I was stunned," she remembers. "How could I have been expelled to an indefinite period?"

At mention of her baby, Arthur breaks down and takes a couple of minutes to compose herself.

Although Arthur says she initially refused to tell her mother she was pregnant, she was eventually forced to do so. "I was 16, I didn't know what to do. I was scared, I was scared, I was scared."

Arthur was sent back to Holy Cross where she remained for another year. "I was shown also the mother superior's office and given two white dresses and a pair of shoes."

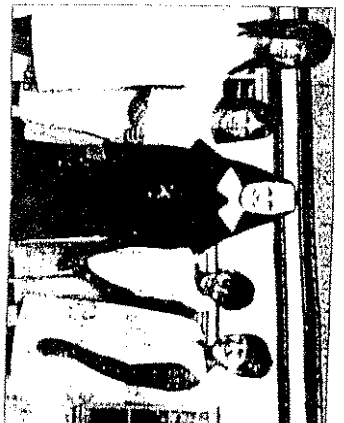
The nuns would deprive us of food as punishment. Then there were beatings with anything they could get their hands on'
Ann Conventale, former Holy Cross resident

Then I was told that my name was going to be Leanne because they thought I had a bit of a baby. She said, 'We can't have you getting that caught in the machines.' I thought, 'What is happening here? How am I going to get used to a name like Leanne? That was a huge thing. They were taking away my whole identity.'"

She says her only personal possession was a secret photo book of pictures of herself and Steve that she kept tucked away in her pocket. "I was sent straight to work in the laundry. The girls worked from dawn to dusk, and sometimes later. She also had to clean the recreation room before breakfast. The only meal she was able to eat was a soup. I never saw or heard of a counsellor or a priest or a nun, and I never saw my mother or father."

The friends-a-work was particularly hard for the pregnant Arthur. "I was on my feet for seven months and I suffered with morning sickness throughout. I didn't eat, I didn't sleep. I knew that I was pregnant, but the thought of that baby kept me going. It was the baby and me. We were there together."

Arthur was 16, she says. "The nuns would deprive us of food as punishment. Then there were beatings with anything they could get their hands on. At the end of the day, they would wash us with soap and water. The water in charge of the laundry was very hot. I was punished with downy snake skins and I got a bit of rag and go back to work. It was never stitched."



Conventale says she was in the laundry for her mother and the girls who had been sent to punishment. Once she was tried to run away, she was arrested and returned to Holy Cross. She spent the next year in the laundry for a week.

Arthur's mother, who was also a nun, was sent to Holy Cross. "I was sent to Holy Cross, I was sent to Holy Cross, I was sent to Holy Cross."

Arthur's mother, who was also a nun, was sent to Holy Cross. "I was sent to Holy Cross, I was sent to Holy Cross, I was sent to Holy Cross."

Arthur's mother, who was also a nun, was sent to Holy Cross. "I was sent to Holy Cross, I was sent to Holy Cross, I was sent to Holy Cross."

Arthur's mother, who was also a nun, was sent to Holy Cross. "I was sent to Holy Cross, I was sent to Holy Cross, I was sent to Holy Cross."

Arthur's mother, who was also a nun, was sent to Holy Cross. "I was sent to Holy Cross, I was sent to Holy Cross, I was sent to Holy Cross."

Arthur's mother, who was also a nun, was sent to Holy Cross. "I was sent to Holy Cross, I was sent to Holy Cross, I was sent to Holy Cross."

Arthur's mother, who was also a nun, was sent to Holy Cross. "I was sent to Holy Cross, I was sent to Holy Cross, I was sent to Holy Cross."

Arthur's mother, who was also a nun, was sent to Holy Cross. "I was sent to Holy Cross, I was sent to Holy Cross, I was sent to Holy Cross."

Arthur's mother, who was also a nun, was sent to Holy Cross. "I was sent to Holy Cross, I was sent to Holy Cross, I was sent to Holy Cross."

I would like to present this submission on behalf of state wards and mothers who were minors and who lost children to unlawful adoption in Queensland Institutions.

My name is Lily Arthur, I was a former state ward under the guardianship of the State of Queensland I am currently the secretary of Origins Inc Supporting Persons Separated by Adoption, a 4th year law student at Macquarie University NSW. I am also the facilitator of the Historical Abuse Network NSW. This network was recently established for persons who were ex-residents of institutions in Qld and who gave evidence to the Forde Inquiry Into Abuses of Children in Queensland Institutions

16th February 1967. At the age of 16 years and eleven months I was taken from my bed, arrested and imprisoned overnight at the South Brisbane Watchhouse. I appeared before the Children's Court the next day and was incarcerated for an indefinite period at Holy Cross Woolloowin Brisbane.

My "crime"? I was pregnant and was considered to be "exposed to moral danger" even though I had a home of my own and the father of my child was prepared to marry me with our parents consent.

I will describe my observations of my fellow inmates at Holy Cross. I will also submit the information I have discovered over the past 6 years. The disgraceful treatment of young unmarried mothers, the illegalities of the State and homes and the lifelong effects of the past unlawful practices and the response to the victims by the State

Holy Cross Retreat was operated by the order of the Sisters of Mercy. It was established and co-located with the Magdalene Asylum for unmarried mothers.

The retreat was based on the Magdalene asylums of Ireland, the object being to provide a home for the destitute and needy irrespective of creed or country, to aid and reform the erring, to shelter the weak minded, and to train the wayward, uncontrollable and erring to habits of self restraint by necessary instruction and kind but firm discipline¹

¹ The Brisbane Centenary official historical souvenir, 1921 on page 265

The Retreat also boasted a steam laundry, being well equipped with up-to-date machinery and all saving appliances.² The young unmarried mothers who were placed in the home, worked without pay in the laundry for the duration of their stay at Holy Cross. Their babies were cared for during the day by other inmates of the retreat, which included destitute women and women suffering from physical and mental disabilities.

Up until 1959/60, the young mother cared for and nursed their babies for up to six months and longer before the child was finally adopted out.

After 1960 the Retreat

accommodated young single mothers until they went into labour. Once having had their baby they were never to be seen again. Their things were packed up and they never came back to tell what had happened to them or to their babies.

Holy Cross Home also known as Industrial School for Girls

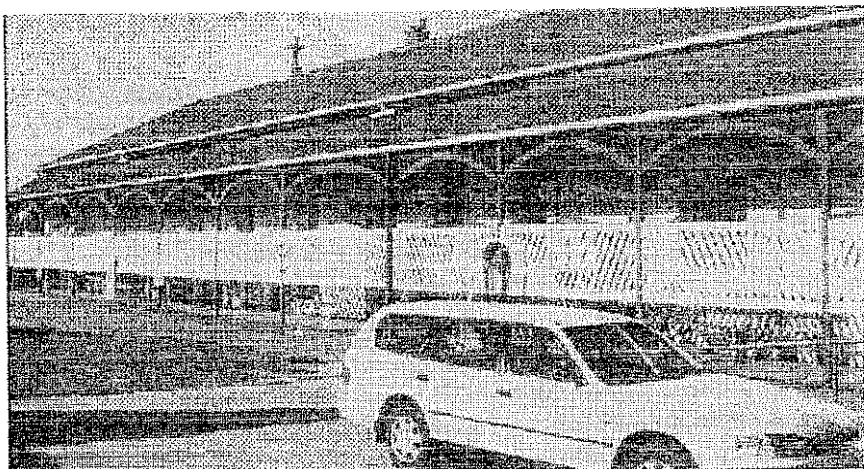
The home was established in 1904 as a reformatory and was renamed Holy Cross Home in 1965. It discontinued accepting State Ward girls in care and control from 1973³. The ages of the girls ranged from fourteen through to 18 and the length of their stay was dependent on the Department, their reformation, and whether the girls were found work or returned to parental care.

They were also made to work without pay not only in the laundry but also in the cleaning and maintenance of the convent and the detention buildings

² History of Holy Cross Oxley Library Brisbane

³ Missing Links, information to assist former residents of children's institutions to access records. The State of Queensland (Dept of Families) publication 2001

⁴ Photos from Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions



Photograph 7.8: Holy Cross at Woolloowin, operated by the Brisbane Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy.
Inquiry photograph

The Holy Cross laundry

My Story

On arrival at Holy Cross I was locked up in the dormitory for four days without any contact with the other girls until bed time. I hid under the blankets and pretended to be asleep when they came up to bed. "I won't talk to them, this is all part of the dream". If I spoke to them this would make what was happening to me real, I thought to myself.

Four days later I again appeared before the Children's Court and was then committed to Holy Cross indefinitely. On my arrival back, Sister Isobel the head nun, handed me two straight white shifts and a pair of thongs that I was to wear, and told me that from now on my name was to be Leanne. I was told not to tell anybody in the home my real name nor was I to ask them theirs. After cutting my shoulder length hair, I was then taken down to the laundry where I was expected to work for the duration of the time I was to spend in the home.

The Home

A week or so later I was called into the office to sign papers to apply for my marriage to Stephan (Steve) Benko. He had gone to Sydney to get our parents permission to get married, and over the next few weeks I was

living in a state of hope, every day thinking that this was going to be the day that he would come and we would be married and I would get out of the home.

Hope and anticipation led to complete despair, followed by the realisation that I was not going to be released from the home. I can't explain exactly what happened but at some point something snapped inside my head and I went into a somewhat robotic state and "distanced" myself from the situation that was happening around me. My brain was receiving "messages" that if I was good and behaved myself everything would be okay.

Although we were not actually verbally threatened by the nuns, there was always an underlying fear of being sent to Karalla, a maximum security home. This deterred me from mixing with any of the state wards who were likely to cause trouble, the ones who were always sneaking around smoking, tattooing each other, fighting and sexually abusing the younger more vulnerable girls in the home.

There were quite a number of break outs whilst I was there, and the girls who had run away were always caught and brought back to the home or were transferred to Karalla. There were also girls who had been to Karalla who were sent back to Holy Cross who told of their treatment there, horrific tales of sleeping on the bare cell floor, with nothing but a bucket in the cell, and food so rotten that it was inedible.

I constantly had thoughts of climbing over the three high fences and running away but the thought of falling off them and hurting my baby scared me. One girl who tried going over the fence broke her leg and was in plaster for months after, so that was enough to deter me.

For the next seven months I did exactly what I was told. I cleaned, I worked 5 days a week in the laundry, I went to school. I wanted to show the nuns that I was a good girl and I was going to make a good mother for my baby.

As my stomach got bigger and my pregnancy became more pronounced, my mind was receiving confusing messages. Here I was at 17 locked up in this place, and unmarried mothers who resided at the rear of the home were about, if not younger than myself. I became resentful and angry that they were allowed to come and go, rest if they were sick, and were allowed to have visitors etc, and yet the reason I was locked up for, was because I was pregnant.

The idea of discipline from the nuns was not so much to inflict individual punishment. If a number of girls were misbehaving then the whole group of us girls were punished. Visitors would not be allowed and they would make us go to mass every day for weeks on end. The nuns seemed to be hovering around us, their long black habits and white headdress reminding me of circling vultures, engaging in little conversation, unless to give orders, always praying, the long rosary beads constantly being fed through their fingers.

We in fact became each others jailers, watching over each other, and if there was any misbehaviour the small rewards we received like the 30cent pocket money to buy sweets on Friday afternoon or the movie that night, was cancelled as well as the piece of cake we received on a Sunday afternoon. A swimming pool in the rear of the home was there to taunt us. Only on "special" occasions were we allowed to swim it to escape the hot Queensland weather.

Anyone who played up and deprived us of these things or upset anyone was dealt with in the dormitory late at night. I was a model "prisoner" older than all the girls and pregnant so I felt left out and felt like I never fitted in.

Many nights were spent listening to the muffled sounds of the younger girls being sexually assaulted with hair brushes etc. I was too scared to speak out fearing that I would too would be assaulted and my baby harmed.

Anything that was a reference to sex was taboo, even the love scenes in the movies we watched were dealt with by a hand being placed over the lens until it was over. I was conveniently put out of sight when the young boys from the local high school came to give dancing lessons to the girls on a Saturday afternoon making me feel "dirty" about my pregnant stomach, I being the only state ward that was pregnant.

Apart from working all day in the laundry the days were made even longer by being woken up at 5 in the morning to go to mass most days of the week. The long hours working with no rest through the day made me very tired and depressed. For eight months I stood most of the time folding sheets, or dragging tangled and wet sheets out of the wire trolleys to roll them up to be passed through the rollers that pressed them flat.

The only rest I got was when I was told to sit and fold pillow cases. I was doing what I could to prepare myself for my baby. On the rare occasion I got a visitor, I was given luxuries like shampoo and talcum powder. These were saved for my baby in my locker on the back verandah. I had accumulated a little store of treasures for my baby and a work friend crocheted a little white matinee jacket and bonnet for the impending arrival. Every now and again I would look at it and imagine my little one wearing it.

It must have been a couple of weeks before I went in to labour when I discovered that my locker had been broken into and my treasure possessions were gone. I was devastated. Even though the other girls knew who had stolen my things they would not tell me. The code of silence was never broken not even by my friends.

During the seven months of my incarceration no one from the Children's Service Department or the nuns spoke to me about my baby. I was treated as if I wasn't even pregnant. In the last three months leading up to the birth there was no visitors, or letters. I felt as though the world had forgotten me. I was to learn later that my sister was not allowed to visit me for nearly four months before and after the birth of my child.

There was never any thought of not being with my baby and as the months passed the little person growing inside of me was my only connection to my sanity. My baby was the only thing in this place that was real, and right up until I gave birth I suffered severe heartburn and stomach upsets from the food we were given. There was no medication given to me to ease the constant burning pain. Somehow the pain became my friend and I manage to "put up" with the pain, looking back, I see that the pain was a reminder that my baby and I were together.

On the 1st of September 1967 at 6 am I had a "show" in mass that morning. I was promptly packed off by ambulance to the hospital where I was admitted to the labour ward. After lying in the ward for a number of hours without any labour pains a nurse came in and broke my water I felt humiliated that my body was being invaded by metal objects. I was terrified that they were going to put something up inside of me and pull the baby out. It wasn't long after that the pains started.

I was in abject fear. No one came in to see what was happening to me watching the hands on the clock go round and around. As the hours passed and the pains were getting stronger I went into a state of sheer

terror as I lay on the bed alone in the labour ward. Not a word from a nurse or doctor to tell me what I was to go through. Throughout the whole of my pregnancy I was not given a piece of paper, booklet, instruction of what the labour process involved. A terrified 17 year old going through the traumatic 16 hour labour process with no idea of what was to happen.

At the point of delivery, I was treated like a piece of meat throughout the whole ordeal, not spoken to unless being given orders by the nurse. I was tied to the side of the bed during the birth of my son. My left leg tied up in a stirrup and my right leg pulled behind me until it felt as though they were breaking my back. The sweet sickly smell of the gas and the rubber mask shoved in my face was making me gag, and my reality drifted into a flashing, numbing, conscious, blacking out unreality.

At 9.59 pm my son was born and as I tried to turn over to see what was happening, the nurse pinned my shoulder to the mattress holding me down until my baby was removed from the room. Struggling to see what happening I managed to catch a glimpse of a group of people leaving the room. God! were they watching me giving birth, looking at my body? I felt as though I had been pack raped! When I asked what I had, I was later told that I had given birth to a son.

Due to the external and internal damage I had I suffered giving birth, I had to have stitches and as the doctor sewed me up, he was jokingly remarking on his "herringbone stitch" and comparing his work to another doctor in the hospital. During this procedure not one word was said to me, it was as though I was not even in the room, a bag of garbage who was not worth acknowledging.

For the next 7 days I hardly remember anything. All I can remember is the urgency to contact Steve and let him know that I had the baby. He came to the hospital to see me twice and the whole thing is a blur. A flash comes of Steve, me and his friend looking through the nursery window trying to work out which one of the babies was mine. Through strained short-sighted eyes I was repeatedly searching the rows of cribs trying to see which one of the babies was mine. Steve pointing to a black haired baby, "that must be him" we agreed. I was to find out later that my baby had blond hair.

My memories of the 8 days spent in the hospital were mostly of myself hiding under the bed clothes.

I still had not been shown my baby and on the 8th day a woman from the department came and threatened and coerced me into signing the adoption papers for my son.

Immediately on signing the papers she asked me if I would like to see my baby and gave me a card to hold up at the nursery window. I was shown a baby but do not remember what it looked like. The sign over the cot saying "Baby Mc Donald, Not to be Shown" When I have flashbacks I just see myself standing at the window in a daze. I know now I was drugged and that was the reason for my dissociation.

As soon as I had seen the baby I was told to pack my things and was sent straight back to the home. On arrival it was as though I had never been away, not a mention of the baby. I was then told by the nun that I was to go down to the laundry where I was to do some work until it was time for tea.

The next six weeks I spent in a dream like trance. I had not had any visitors for almost 4 months nor did I hear from my family. It was as though I had been forgotten by the world and I was going to stay in the home forever.

Not long after my return to the home I was rewarded. By not having the big stomach anymore I was sent up to the convent to do the house work and clean up after the nuns. Mother Liam commending me in front of the girls at morning prayers saying, that I cleaned the bathrooms better than anyone who had cleaned there before.

Six weeks after the birth of my baby I was told by the nun that I was being sent back to my mother in Sydney. All I can remember is getting angry. I expected to be locked up until I turned 18, five months later. Two days before my release, I was sitting on the verandah after finishing work in the convent when Sister Isobel came along and ordered me to go into the laundry and finish the rest of the day working in there.

All I can remember was telling her to "get lost", my first act of defiance in 9 months. She started whipping my leg with a feather duster as I ran along the verandah and into the laundry. I didn't care if they kept me locked up forever; there was nothing left for me in the outside world again.

A few months later whilst working in a lighting factory a woman with who I had become friendly announced she leaving the next day as she

was adopting a baby, I very became upset and the birth of my son and his loss came flooding back to me. I don't know why but I went home and got the matinee jacket and bonnet and gave it to her, it was as though I was giving it to her for my own baby, last physical connection with my baby was gone

I spent the next 30 years living in a dream. Although I knew that I had had this experience, my memory of it was very hazy as though it had happened to someone else and not to me.

I never spoke of it to anyone, nor did I tell my daughter about it or the fact that she had a brother until she turned 19 some 23 years after the event.

When I finally found my son, I went through a period of happiness, depression, mood swings and flashbacks, trying to put together a picture in my mind that I could not understand. I felt as though I was going to lose "the plot" entirely, my mind was in a state of utter turmoil with flashbacks, intense anger, depression, etc. I went to a psychologist and was told to see a psychiatrist. I then went to my GP who referred me to one. My mind is still in a state of confusion and anger. I am still trying to come to terms with my imprisonment and the premeditated theft of my only son.

I have been undergoing hypnotherapy and when "taken back" I see myself as Leanne pacing the verandah of Holy Cross. It is as though she is frozen in time. My mind seeing her in the cell, seeing the arrest, the court, the labour ward, the smell of the gas still so vivid in my mind that I feel nauseous. I hear the words of the social worker, the images are flashing so fast my mind cannot grab onto what is happening. The psychiatrist asks Leanne to leave the home but she is unable to get out of the place where she has had the last contact with her baby.

I see her pacing in the dormitory and her head is exploding. After being isolated for days she comes to terms with being locked up and looks forward to going down with the other girls she sees from the window playing netball after work.

During my "going back" hypnotherapy I am frozen stiff in the psychiatrist's chair, Leanne takes over and weeps incessantly and is hardly able to communicate. My mind sees her standing still as though she is in a vortex and when the psychiatrist asks her to tell what is happening she is unable to speak. During these sessions she gets such intense pains in her head, and my head feels this as well and feels as

though her head and my head is about to explode. I come out of therapy unable to comprehend exactly what has gone on, unable to connect with my surroundings.

Looking back, I now see the effect of the solitary confinement, not only the imprisonment but the deliberate "breaking" off ties with Steve my sister Jenny and my family, was used to make me compliant. The depersonalisation of myself by taking my name and clothes and my hair away, so that I lost my sense of identity, security and history in order that I could be subjugated to do whatever I was told.

On my release from Holy Cross and out in the world, I was once again made to take on the personality of Lily, my carefree 16 year old self was lost.

Nine months was taken out of my life and lived by someone who was called Leanne, I feel as though she was the one who lost my baby. My psychiatrist is trying to integrate her into my life and to make her experience part of my experience.

I will never be the same person who was incarcerated; Lily the 16 year old carefree girl was lost. I emerged from Holy Cross "split" in half, two personalities who have never fitted together, two halves who had to merge into a person who lived in a fugue state in order to survive.

Adoption fraud

In July 15 1991 I heard that adoption laws were changing to enable me to finally find my son and as such I needed to know about the circumstances surrounding my sons adoption in order to tell him what had happened.

I Contacted the Department of Family Services for information on my time in Holy Cross and also a history of my Court and Departmental records. I received a letter saying that my records were no longer available as they had been destroyed.

46. August 15 1991 When the adoption laws changed in Queensland I applied to the Department for identifying information about my son. I received a phone call from Ms. Susan Harris informing me that my son had placed a contact and information objection on all information about him. She told me that she had phoned me to prepare me for a letter that she was sending with a message that he had left me.

She spoke to me for nearly two hours over the phone because I was very upset. I received the letter a couple of days later with the message which contained three words "I have Parents.

With the contact objection I also received a letter from the Department of Families which threatened to jail me for 2 years and fine me \$6000 if I tried to locate and contact my son. This made me very ill and frightened and made me feel like a criminal.

I found myself not being able to cope anymore. I had just moved into a new home and had brought all new furniture and accessories. I put all my clothes into my car and left my husband, daughter, home, job, and friends and went to Queensland where I stayed for 2 years I then returned to Sydney. As best as I could I tried to "get on with my life"

February 1997 I decided to do a TAFE course in Community Welfare and In April 1997 as part of an assignment I was instructed to join an group to study it's dynamics. I chose a group called Origins Inc and rang a woman called Dian Wellfare.

In was in the course of the first phone call that I discovered that I had some "rights" and it emerged that my rights had been abused

Ms Wellfare told me my rights were; to be offered financial support to enable me to keep my child. To be offered options to adoption such as foster care. And to warn me of the life long psychological consequences if I gave my child up for adoption. I told her that I had not been given these rights She then went on to tell me that these were my entitlements. At that point I was not aware of the illegalities of my sons adoption.

18 th Februaury 1998 I also wrote to the Royal Women's Hospital at Herston where I had delivered my son requesting my medical records. I was told my records had been destroyed

I wrote many other letters to a lot of people including the British High Commissioner, the Govenor General Minister of the Department of Families Mr Kev Lingard all asking for help. I also enlisted the help of my local members of parliament Mrs Janice Crosio (federal) and (state) Mr Joe Tripodi.

I might also add that with each reply I received I was feeling ignored and dismissed with each rejection of the help I had asked for. Whilst most of

these people expressed regret of my experiences not one of these people told or implied to me that my treatment was unlawful.

At this stage I still did not know my sons first adopted name.

I was desperate to find my son and I also had an article written in 'That's Life' magazine in case my son would see it

On the 1st December 1997 I finally found out the my son's first name was Tim It took me a while to realise that the name of my son had been changed. It was then my husband and daughter and I started to search the electoral rolls for all the Tims in South East Qld

April 1998 just by chance I found my son after going through the QLD State Archives It was not long after this that I heard there was going to be an Inquiry Into the Abuse of State Wards In Queensland Institutions (Forde Inquiry).

I put in a submission and appeared before the Inquiry on the **6th October 1998 at 3.00pm.** At the Forde Inquiry interview I asked Ms Leneen Forde if she could recommend bringing criminal charges against the persons who were involved with my son's adoption she told me that the Inquiry could only address the abuses I had suffered inside the home

The Forde Inquiry heard many stories of young State Wards losing their children to past unlawful adoption practices and there has been no acknowledgement of the illegalities in the Report, this issue was not explored by the committee as the unlawful treatment occurred outside of the institutions.

Ms Forde advised me to make a complaint to the police. Which I did the following day I went to the Caboolture police station and made a statement in relation to my son's adoption. At the first instance the police sergeant thought that I must not have been serious about my claim but when I told him that Leneen Forde had indicated that this was the avenue to follow the sergeant took my allegations more seriously and had a detective interview me and take a statement.

Eighteen months later I was informed by a detective with the Qld Crime Squad that they could no longer pursue with the action as the social

worker was dead, the nurse could not remember me and the doctor could not be found.

Since 1997 I have been working with the adoption group Origins apart of it's committee and as part of my participation with the group. I helped to lobby for an inquiry into past adoption practices in New South Wales. The Inquiry to determine if adoption practices in New South Wales were unlawful and unethical was announced in March of 1998.

December 2000 The Final Report Releasing the Past Inquiry into Adoption Practices in NSW was released it was then that the it was acknowledged that he practice of forbidding the mother to see her child was unlawful.

In 1998 I had received a letter from the Qld Minister for Health Ms Wendy Edmonds on the 1st September 1998 stating that the unlawful practice of not allowing the mother to see her baby was "usual practice" (letter attached) in Qld.

I later found out in June/July 2000 when preparing material for my solicitors, that the age of consent for a girl in Queensland was sixteen. This became knowledge to myself when I downloaded a copy of the Qld Crimes Act. I was devastated on finding out that there was no real reason for my arrest. and that the State had acted unlawfully by falsely imprisoning me and stealing my child.

Whilst I cannot prove it I also charge that the Nuns in Holy Cross colluded with the State in the theft of my son. It has been brought to attention by my son that his adoptive grand-parents lived 3 doors down from Holy Cross and were parishioners and that the mother of his adoptive brother Shaun was also interred at Holy Cross. I have been in contact with a number of mothers also from Holy Cross who children were placed in the vicinity of the church.

The Catholic Church knew adoption practices were unlawful from 1965

In the 1965 National Conference of Association of Social Workers Mary Lewis(Catholic Social Worker) states "the agencies in this country have punitive, harmful and illegal practices when it comes to a mothers inalienable right to contact with her child" I was knowingly fed into an unlawful hospital system by the nuns without any warning about the

treatment that was going to be perpetrated upon me or my child nor was I given counselling after the theft of my son.

The Department of Children's Services has also been aware that other unmarried mother church homes such as St Mary's at Toowong in Queensland were in the practice of "baby trading" with Australian babies being sent overseas, never to know their origin.

The Department of Families has still not addressed this issue of the babies for sale scandal instigated by Matron Ivy Macgregor. I have been approached by 2 of these "babies" who still cannot get information about their identity. They have been told by the Department that if they find out how to get information to let them know so they can pass the information on to a number of person they have on their books

An article in the QLD Sunday Mail dated Aug 27 1995 alleges that baby selling was being carried out in Queensland.

In the article two women one a natural mother and the other, an adoptive mother tell their stories of how the Matron of St Mary's Home at Towoong deliberately broke the laws of the time and sold babies to adoptive parents for the sum of fifty pounds or in today's equivalent \$100.

The matron Ivy McGregor forced mothers to sign adoption papers before the birth of their babies and then arranged adoptions of newborns to adoptive parents outside Australia.

One 16 year said that she was sent home from the hospital after the birth without seeing her baby. She only saw the baby when she was taken back to the hospital to hand the baby over to the adoptive parents. She recalls the look of compassion at her distress from the adoptive mother when she handed over the child.

The matron then told her to look out the window and watch the adoptive parents take the child away.

The woman later wrote to the Department seeking information but was told that there was no record of her adoption as some of the adoptions at the home were illegal, and there was nothing they could do about it.

The article went on to tell about a couple living in Papua New Guinea in the 60s who asked their local Anglican minister to help them adopt a child. The minister then initiated contact with Matron McGregor who informed them that she had 26 girls in the home and could do something for them.

Mrs McCabe says from what she has learned there was certainly potential for improper private arrangements to be made through St Mary's.

While Mr Dewar says that he believes that the home had not been involved in financial dealings he was concerned that the movement of Queensland babies to other states says that it is here where a danger of baby selling exists.

- 1 SEP 1998

MI070685
2640-0071-001

Mrs L Arthur

F 15

Dear Mrs Arthur

Thank you for your letter of 4 August 1998 concerning the birth of your son.

I have made enquiries at the Royal Women's Hospital and am advised that the clinical records of mothers who delivered in 1967 are no longer available. In line with Queensland Health guidelines, these records were confidentially destroyed after a period of 25 years. I understand that in a letter dated 27 February 1998, the Medical Superintendent of the Royal Women's Hospital provided you with this information in response to your letter of 18 February 1998.

It is difficult to answer your questions in the absence of the clinical record. However, concerning the question about why you were delivered in such a way that you could not see the child at birth, the practice in maternity hospitals at that time in delivering women of their first baby was to use that position. That was standard obstetric practice at the time and the adoption of that position helped the midwife or attending doctor to protect the perineum against undue damage.

In reply to the question about why your son was immediately taken away without your being allowed to see him, this was the usual practice which applied in those days. It was felt the pain of separation may be less for an adopting mother if she did not see her child. With the benefit of greater information and insight, this has not been the practice in recent years.

An exact answer cannot be given to your question about being administered carcinogenic anti-lactation drugs. The practice at that time was to use oestrogen tablets to dry up the milk. They were not carcinogenic for women after delivery. However, the practice was ceased because of the small risk of some women developing clots, particularly older women.

The answer to your question as to why you have been denied information about the details of the birth, the confinement of your son and the details of medication, lies in the fact that the clinical records from the years prior to 1972 are no longer available.

For your information I have attached a copy of the letter of 27 February 1998 forwarded to you by the Medical Superintendent of the Royal Women's Hospital. In that letter the offer was made to provide you with the documentary evidence that was available in relation to the birth of your son. As I have been provided with a copy of that information (the admission card and the entry concerning your delivery in the Birth Register), I am enclosing copies with this letter.

I am sorry that you are still suffering much pain from the relinquishing of your son thirty years ago. Please be assured that with greater understanding and knowledge, the practices which applied at that time have changed significantly and ensure that such situations will not occur in the future.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention and I trust this information clarifies the situation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Wendy Edmond', followed by a period.

Wendy Edmond MLA
MINISTER FOR HEALTH