

Elizabeth Edwards

Dear Professors

I am the convener of the Organization *Origins Victoria Inc* an International support group for mothers and their children separated and lost to adoption.

Our group was formed at Parliament House Victoria in 1998 with the full encouragement of Christine Campbell MP.

We are currently lobbying for a Senate Inquiry into past unethical and in some cases unlawful adoption practices.

I am not speaking about adoption itself but the way in which separation of a mother and her child occurred i.e. forced separation or Duress applied thus negating the choice of an informed consent.

Some mothers were told their babies died only to be confronted by that child a lifetime later when her baby resurrected from the dead! These babies had been placed to an alien breast of a woman who had a history of still births. This was deemed to be a favored method of getting a baby for adoption until the proclamation of the 1964 adoption act which required a cooling off period where a mother could revoke her consent. See **Department of Child Welfare Seminar at Sydney 3rd February 1967.**

I for one married the father of our child 11 months before the adoption order was made. At no time did my husband give his consent for our legitimated baby to be adopted. See Section 89 (1) Commonwealth Marriage Act 1961.

* on the 21st November 1963 the doctor had administered a large amount of nitrous oxide which rendered me unconscious during the birth of our first child. There was no medical reason for this.

* It is highly likely my hospital file would have been marked BFA *baby for adoption* or A for adoption this was a code constructed to alert the labor ward staff not to allow a single and vulnerable mother to see or hold her baby. Because I delivered our baby in a private hospital in Moreland Victoria I am unable to gain access to my records, drug sheets, and our baby's nursery notes under the FOI Act. I have also been denied her health centre records despite being her legal guardian until the adoption order was signed in April 1965. I have however received our daughter baptismal certificate she had been baptized in what was then the proposed adopters name, on the 22nd December 1963 by a priest in a parish in Coburg who would in May 1964 accept the role of guardian ad Litem. Clearly he had a by virtue of the baptism a vested interest and this was his hidden agenda.

* We were available at all times. My husband and I were our babies' only legal guardians yet the priest did at no time contact Bill or I to ensure adoption was in our child's best interest, we were married and living in Coburg. ***I have all of the court records and can validate my claims.*** See **The adoption of children rules 1957 Rule 20-21 and 22 The Adoption Of Children's Act 1958 section 4 and 5 The adoption of children rules 1957 sections 7,8, 9,10,11, 13, 14. The Adoption of Children Act 1958** stated a consent to adoption to be invalid if taken under duress. In order to gain my consent I was threatened that my fiancé William Edwards would go to jail for carnal knowledge, this was not true! I was eighteen and he nineteen years of age, our baby was just twenty-four hours old when this coercion occurred.

* Further to this I had been denied my baby I was also in a dazed lethargic state and I panicked when threatened with this consequence, I had not heard this before. Justice Chisholm stated this constituted the unlawful removal of a baby in the NSW Standing Committee on past adoption practices See *Final report page 140*

- The 1964 Adoption Act did away with the need for consent from a father it replaced the father with the director general but the 1958 act required a baby's father consent, it also ensured the father's legal responsibility until the signing of an adoption order. **This did not happen.**
- As the Carer of our baby I was entitled to receive a commonwealth benefit that paid one shilling less than the widow's pension see

Department ***Social Services Thirtieth Annual Report of the Director General 1970-71: The Social Services ACT Explained by D. E. Franklin pages 37-49 widows pension page 16: Social Security in Australia T.W.Kewely Sydney University Press 1965*** : however I did not apply for welfare because I worked full time as a nursing aide until the day before I gave birth. I returned to full time work three weeks after delivering our baby. **Bill worked at all times and was prepared to pay maintenance for the baby and myself.**

- When our baby was approximately two weeks old I received her birth certificate in the mail it stated our baby to be illegitimate! distressed and appalled with this information I immediately contacted the Matron and requested our baby be returned, she replied "it was too late and when could I return to work" Feeling defeated I agreed to return to work
- We were married when our baby was 7 months old at Our Lady's Catholic church Ringwood on the 27th June 1964
- ***The Marriage Act (1961) sec 64 legitimated our daughter***; however Bill was not consulted as to the welfare of our child. His legal rights as her Father were negated, although we were engaged to be married 4 months before conception, he was not documented on our daughter's birth certificate.
- At the time I signed the consent William Edwards had not been informed of the birth of his daughter. The Matrons solicitor and a stranger to us named our baby as "Unnamed Toohey" Illegitimate baby daughter of Elizabeth.

* We were the legal guardians of our child until the adoption order was made, on April 13th 1965 she was then 18 months of age, yet three weeks after her birth, when we requested our baby be returned to us we were told by the Matron "it was too late".

* In May 1964 a Catholic priest accepted the responsibility of acting as guardian ad Litem, and despite the regulations requiring him to present a report to the court, ensuring adoption to be in the best interest of our child, at no time did he contact us. My then husband and I were living and

working in Coburg, a short distance from his parish house. His failure to present a report to the court has been attributed to the church claiming he was posted to the missions. I have requested his records however the date of his posting was not recorded.

Like so many other Mothers I did not see my baby.

I did not hold her kiss her or even smell her.

I need to forgive these people, I need to be heard.

I need to be listened to in an inquiry into civil crimes in past adoption practices.

Our subsequent children need to have the answer to why they were denied the right to grow up with their sister. They need to know that the State of Victoria holds their parent's marriage vows as real and sacred as they do the adoptive parents marriage. This did not happen.

We all need to know why she was adopted to others as baby Toohey Illegitimate daughter of Elizabeth Toohey when clearly she had been abducted from us and our marriage had legitimated baby Kim Elizabeth Edwards daughter Of William John and Elizabeth Edwards.

However these practices were not isolated to Victoria they have been well documented Australia wide. In 1999 an Inquiry was held in the

NSW PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL ISSUES INQUIRY INTO ADOPTION PRACTICES:

"Releasing The Past the Final Report"

Lasting three years it was the second longest inquiry recorded in NSW history. Justice Chisholm testified that the denial of a baby to its mother to be unlawful removal.

(see page 140)

A single mother had the same right to her baby as any other Mother who presented in labor. This was not the case for 140 thousand single Mothers who lost their own flesh and blood.

Often people argue the moral high ground, Origins response is "do people really believe God to be capable of making a mistake? Do people really believe that God places a baby in the wrong womb because the mother is single?

Yet Mothers were incarcerated in single mother's homes, their names changed and the greatest swindle in modern history was born. Some mothers were placed with wealthy families to carry out domestic duties. They were not paid, they were given board and a room, however they were forbidden to bring the baby home to the room.

Mothers were told to go away to get on with their lives that one day "*they would marry and have a baby of their own*"!! In other words they must deny they had a maternity. Adoptive parents were given a baby **to own**. Adopted children were told that the parents they had been **allocated were their own**.

Our scars are not visible; the torture of wondering where is your child? Is my baby alive or dead? Was our experience if we had not dissociated to the point of total denial. And the trauma we have inherited from this unnatural practice that formed a genetic experiment, was not God centered, rather it grew from the atheistic solution proposed by Eugenicist John Galton a first cousin of Charles Darwin advocating that he had the solution to all the social problems experienced in the world.

Adoption is a huge delusion affecting many people, and little if any research has been carried out on the affects of forced separation.

However before we can discuss the effects, there needs to be an inquiry. We need the truth to be recognized so that as a group we too can heal.

The State government argued there had been an inquiry in 1976 this is not true. How could there be an inquiry into crimes in adoption? Natural mothers and their child had not received any information until 1999. Instead there was a review of adoption not an inquiry.

I request an appointment to further discuss our issues of crimes in past adoption practices that occurred during the peak adoption period in Australia.

Yours Sincerely

Elizabeth Edwards

Convenor Origins Vic Inc