

My Name is Leonie White nee Cuff and this is the story of my suffering for the past 48 years, due to my son being taken away from me at birth.

In 1971 at the age of 16 I found out I was Pregnant I had been with my boyfriend for approximately 12 months. When I told him he took me to a doctor his father knew and I was given a some tablets which would assist in a miscarriage. This never happened and at 4 months pregnant my Mother realised that I was pregnant.

She said I was never to tell anybody, I do know they tried to have my boyfriend charged with something. I was at his place one day when two plain-clothed police (friends of my fathers) arrived at his door a warned him to keep away from me.

My parent decided to send me to St. Josephs Babies Home in Broadmeadows where I meet other girls that were there for the same reason. We were not catholic, I had never been away from home for longer than a couple of days, but I told I'm so bad I have to live in a dormitory environment, looked after by Nuns and made to work in the laundry. As if my life wasn't bad enough.

I remained at St Joseph's Broadmeadow until April 3, 1972, we were spoke ,by the Nuns constantly telling us how our children were going to be better off being adopted as we had nothing to offer them.

I was admitted to The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne 3/4/72 where a procedure to induce the birth was performed, total duration of Labour was between 24 and 36 hours as per the attached report, my son weighed 3920g (8lb 6 oz) and suffered a broken collar bone on delivery which I have only recently found out after requesting copies of my records under FOI from the hospital. I had requested copies of the medication that were administered to me as I always thought my son was born 4/4/72 but in actual fact he was not born until 5/4/72.

Prior to my sons birth a group of girls would travel by train into the city for our regular check-ups at the clinic at the hospital, we would be there with all the other Married Women and felt even more humiliation. After my sons birth I was transferred to a ward with approximately five other women all of whom were married and keeping there babies which was extremely hard.

I was discharged from the hospital 13/4/72 and driven out to St. Joseph's, Broadmeadows by my mother that showed no compassion for the situation she just kept telling me it was all over and we were going to sign the Adoption Papers and get on with the rest of our live, (easier said than done) I remember telling her I wasn't going to sign them, that I wanted to keep the baby. She told me if I didn't sign them she would and we were never to talk about it again.

I suffered constantly and at one stage attempted suicide as I had know one to talk too

and longed for my baby boy, I did in the first couple of months write to the Babies Home, telling them I had changed my mind but was told it was too late that he had already been adopted.

I met and married my Husband in 1976 and longed to have another baby as I thought it would ease the pain but in fact it only made it worse.

My second son was born in 1980, which instead of being a happy time was filled with fear. After the birth I had a general anaesthetic to remove the placenta, then I required a Blood Transfusion. When I woke my son was not with me, I was extremely upset as it just brought the memories of my first sons birth and having him taken away.

When I was in the ward my Husband requested that our son be circumcised which I did not have a problem with until the Sister in Charge of the ward at Mercy Hospital came with papers for me to sign before the procedure could be performed and said was I aware that One in so many children die from being circumcised. The absolutely freaked me out, they ended up sending for my Doctor who was away I my previous situation who calmed me down.

Over the years I have had many bouts of depression and I have been on medication

I contact that Catholic Family Welfare Bureau in 1985 wanting to find out information but could not go ahead with the application as I was scared of being rejected.

In September 1989 I was contact by CFWB as they had received an enquiry from my Son for contact information. Whilst this meeting was being organised I received a phone call from CFWB saying that prior to contacting me they hadn't realised my mother had submitted an application for contact with my son. As I'm sure you could understand this caused me a great amount of distress. My mother had not discussed this with me at all. I eventually told CFWB that if my mother was given preference over me, not to contact me again, as I would never forgive her.

Eventually it was arranged for me to meet my son, at the CFWB, 94 Grattan Street, Carlton. We were not given any council ling, just introduced to each other and left for 1 hour to talk before they closed for the day. My son was 17 and had travelled by himself from Ballarat for the meeting which I never wanted to end.

In October 1989 it had been a week since I had heard from [REDACTED] as he wasn't very happy that his stepbrothers did not know about him, his stepbrother were only 9 & 7 years old. Eventually the boys met, which went well but thing were always strained between he and I. I always scared I would say the wrong thing and he would get annoyed. We kept in contact from about 4 years but it was always very strained.

Every now and again during the last 17 years [REDACTED] would ring my Husband to see how everyone was, but never asked to talk to me. [REDACTED] got married to a lovely girl [REDACTED] who I met many years ago and had 2 children (My Grandchildren) [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

In January this year he told my husband [REDACTED] that his children would like to meet me and asked would I have a problem with that. Of course I wouldn't they are my grandchildren.

We met for lunch, [REDACTED] & I which went well. But again I felt on edge that I would say something to upset him.

The National Apology was just words, please tell me when my suffering will end.

I have letter I've written to my son through the years but they are very private.

In 2012 under FIO I requested my medical records from the Royal Womens hospital, I requested all information regarding the medication that were administered to me during my very long labour ([REDACTED]). I was sent general information so I contacted the Hospital Records Dept. and was told that they were more than likely in a sealed box which they were not authorised to open. Therefore I would have to be happy with what I had received. I'M NOT
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