



Babies for Sale: The Tennessee Children's Home Adoption Scandal

Linda T. Austin

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In 1950, the Governor of Tennessee called for an investigation of the Tennessee Children's Home black market baby operations, said to have grossed \$1 million for Georgia Tann, the superintendent of the local branch of the home. Tann was accused of fraudulently persuading pregnant mothers to relinquish their children. A number of Hollywood celebrities adopted children through the home, namely Joan Crawford, June Allyson, and Dick Powell. During the investigation, local attorneys and justices were found to be part of the scandalous network of adoption that allowed adoptive parents to be out-of-state residents. The story is dramatic and shows southern politics at its worst--congenial, respected public figures running shady deals in the back room. Thousands of children were placed in adopted homes during the agency's operation. Each case is a fascinating story involving the search and reunion of adopted children with their natural families.

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