**Directions: After reading the article, “Orphaned in Argentina” you should take notes on things that explained what happened during the Dirty War (what caused it, who was involved, how it changed the country, etc.) . When you finish taking notes you will answer the following questions with two paragraph responses PER question (a paragraph should be at least six sentences). You will turn this in at the end of class for a FORMAL GRADE.**

1. Citing the article, specifically explain how human rights were violated during the Dirty War in Argentina. What things do you believe are justified in times of chaos or war to control and maintain order? Explain.
2. Do you think human rights should ever be violated? Justify your answer for the position that you take. How were the human rights of Alejandro Rei violated? Explain.
3. How do you think that Argentina should handle the cases of the kidnapped children? Should DNA tests be mandatory or should people have a right to privacy? Explicate your choice.

**Orphaned in Argentina's Dirty War, Man is Torn Between Two Families**

By Juan Forero, Washington Post Staff Writer

BUENOS AIRES -- Alejandro Rei refused to accept the truth, even after the man he thought was his father pulled the car over one night and told him he had been adopted. "You are the son of the disappeared," Victor Rei told him, his eyes tearing up. Alejandro did not know it then, but Victor would have had intimate knowledge: He had been a military intelligence officer, a cog in a ferocious military machine that in the 1970s smashed two rebel groups in Argentina by kidnapping and torturing suspected guerrillas and dissidents. The victims were shot and buried in unmarked graves, or sedated and hurled alive from airplanes over the south Atlantic. In the mournful lexicon of Latin American dictatorship, they were the "disappeared." And on that night in 2004, Alejandro was hearing that his real parents had been victims of the military junta during the "dirty war." For nearly five years, though, Alejandro would be torn between recognizing the fate of his real parents and his loyalty to the people who raised him.

Victor's revelation was the beginning of a long, tortuous process that would include police raids, DNA tests, a trial that put the father Alejandro had known behind bars and, finally, a rocky reunion with the biological family that had wanted him back since 1977. "When all this happened, I began to carry a weight called guilt, and I blamed myself for all of this," said Alejandro, now 32. "It was not until 2009 that I realized I was not guilty for all that had happened." With 400 children still unaccounted for, Argentina is accelerating a search to clear up one of the great mysteries of South America's most brutal military dictatorship: What happened to the stolen babies? What is known is that, like Alejandro, children were snatched from doomed mothers in clandestine detention centers, mostly from 1976 to 1978, then raised by military families or their accomplices.

Those spearheading the search belong to a group of grandmothers dedicated to finding their lost grandchildren. They have allies in President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's government and the help of a powerful tool: a law approved in November to quicken the identification process by forcing young adults thought to be children of the disappeared to provide DNA samples. Driving the effort is an urgent reality: The grandmothers are dying off. "We do not have time to keep waiting, because we are all very old," said Estela Barnes de Carlotto, 82, who is president of the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo and is searching for her daughter's son. "There are grandmothers who are 90 or older who have not yet found their grandchildren." So far, 100 stolen babies -- most now in their early 30s -- have been found.

But if Alejandro's experience serves as a road map, the effort to find the rest is sure to be marked with doubt and wrenching pain. Like him, many will come to two awful realizations: that the parents they have known raised them illegitimately and that, in some cases, their adoptive parents participated in the deaths of their biological parents. Some, like Evelyn Vazquez, have done everything to thwart investigators, believing they must protect the parents who raised them. Others, like Manuel Goncalves, said recouping their lost identity has meant everything. "When I learned I would never know my parents, it was very hard, but I also learned the truth," said Goncalves, 33. Truth vs. the right to privacy is at the heart of a heated debate in a country that is still grappling with how to deliver justice a quarter-century after its last dictatorship ended.

**Robbing the cradles**

The roots of the state terror go back to the mid-1970s, when the incompetent administration of President Isabel Martinez de Perón was powerless to stop bombings and assassinations. The generals moved on March 24, 1976, toppling the president and instituting a ruthlessly efficient strategy: round up suspected guerrillas and their sympathizers and torture them. Whether useful information was gleaned or not, the detainees were killed, up to 30,000 of them, according to rights groups. What the military had not considered was what to do with the babies born in the torture centers.

Alan Iud, coordinator of the Grandmothers' lawyers, said military planners decided to kill the mothers, draw up fake birth certificates for the orphaned babies and hand them over to military families. "The handover of the children to members of the armed forces evidently was a mechanism by which each appropriator could show his commitment with the regime," Iud said. Prosecutors are now preparing for a trial in which the military dictator from 1976 until 1981, Gen. Jorge Rafael Videla, and other high-ranking officers will be tried on charges of having operated a baby-theft ring fueled by what investigators call a depraved ideology. "They thought that you did not give the sons of subversives to the grandparents of subversives because they'll be subversives, too," said Judge María del Carmen Roqueta, who oversaw Victor Rei's trial. Among the mothers whose fate was sealed upon her arrest on July 1, 1977, was Liliana Fontana. Taken prisoner with her companion, Pedro Sandoval, she was thrown into a torture center nicknamed the Athletic Club. Only 20, she did not know that her jailers had sinister plans for her, Sandoval and the baby she was carrying.

They were housed in a dungeon, each in a tubelike 3-by-6-foot cell. The political prisoners who survived the Athletic Club speak of how interrogators used electric prods to elicit information. Delia Barrera, held for 92 days, remembered the young couple. "The oppressors used them as slave labor -- they had to bring food, wash the clothes, clean the bathrooms," Barrera recalled. Two clear recollections haunt her -- how Fontana and Sandoval quietly sang love songs to each other and how on Nov. 4, 1977, the day Barrera was transferred from the center, Fontana hugged her goodbye. "She gave me a kiss, and I could feel her pregnancy," Barrera said. Investigators think Fontana was sent to the notorious Campo de Mayo detention center, giving birth on Dec. 28, 1977. Then she vanished, as did Sandoval.

Fontana's parents, Clelia Deharbe de Fontana and Rubén Antonio Fontana, enlarged a picture of their daughter and began marching with it outside the presidential palace, demanding to know what had happened to her. Soon dozens of mothers and grandmothers did the same. As the years passed and Deharbe de Fontana realized she would never see her daughter again, she turned her attention to a grandson who she sensed was still alive. "I had word from kids who had been with her in the detention center and she had still been pregnant," recalled Deharbe de Fontana, now 78, at her kitchen table in a Buenos Aires suburb. "I continued searching, always, always, wherever I had to go." A generation later, her drive to learn the truth would come barreling into Alejandro Rei's pleasant suburban life.

**Caught in the middle**

His days were filled with rugby matches, cookouts and quiet comforts in Hurlingham, a Buenos Aires suburb of gardens and Tudor homes. He had trained as a chef and a computer technician and had held a range of jobs, including baker and gas station owner. His father, Victor Rei, was a beloved professor. His mother, Alicia Arteach, was known for being especially affectionate with Alejandro and an older son.

Alejandro had little idea, but the Grandmothers had long ago turned their attention to Victor, who as early as the 1980s had appeared at government proceedings to testify about military tactics in the dirty war. Later, a tantalizing clue came from a neighbor of the Rei family, who recalled how Arteach had once mentioned that Alejandro had been adopted. In 1987, one grandmother -- thinking Alejandro, then 8, was her grandson -- showed up at the Rei home and said: "You're my grandson." "No, I am not," Alejandro responded. Rei and Arteach quickly concocted a story that a gang was kidnapping children and warned him to avoid all strangers. But though military officers who tortured and killed were protected by amnesties, the crime of baby theft was open to prosecution, and in 2002, Victor was again summoned to give testimony. "Justice had him completely identified," Alejandro explained. "What they lacked was confirmation that I was the son of the disappeared." The Grandmothers continued digging, collecting Alejandro's birth certificate. Tellingly, it was signed by a doctor who had frequently put his name on false birth certificates.

Victor began to fear that he would be charged, especially after Néstor Kirchner won the presidency in 2003 and pledged to overturn the laws that shielded military officers. So in March 2004, in that late-night drive home, Victor told Alejandro that he and Arteach had taken him in 1978 to save him from certain death. He told Alejandro that a military officer at Campo de Mayo had orders to kill the babies but had defied his commanders and brought Alejandro to the Rei home. Victor asked Alejandro to do all he could to protect him and Arteach from prosecution. When the Grandmothers sought a blood sample from Alejandro, to compare his DNA with that of the grandparents of the disappeared, he did not cooperate. "I weighed everything that I had lived in my 26 years," Alejandro explained. "I thought, what I had received was a real love, a real affection, and so I determined that I would defend them as much as I could."

But by May, authorities had enough circumstantial evidence to charge Rei with kidnapping and falsifying documents. He was detained, coincidentally, at Campo de Mayo. In newspaper reports, information began to come out about Rei. He had not been a bureaucrat in the military, as Alejandro had been led to believe, but had been a leading intelligence operative. Alejandro recalls those confusing days as ones of extreme loneliness, not knowing whom to believe. At the time, the extraction of DNA depended on the cooperation of judges willing to put more weight on a grandmother's right to know than another person's right to privacy. One such judge, Maria Servini de Cubría, did that in the Rei case, ordering a raid on Alejandro's apartment. Police collected a comb and a toothbrush. On July 14, 2006, authorities announced that the DNA gleaned from those belongings showed that his parents were Liliana Fontana and Pedro Sandoval.

**Held to account**

Less than two months later, Servini de Cubría summoned to her office Alejandro and his biological family -- grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins. Alejandro said he and the others stood nervously until Liliana Fontana's brother, Edgardo Fontana, broke the ice with a quip: "Well, here we are, so let's meet." "They hugged me, and I had my hands down," Alejandro recalled. "I did not know what to do. Then I hugged them back, and they began to cry. . . . They felt that they had found their grandson." For the next two hours, the family members talked, mostly about what everyone did for a living. They all tiptoed around the more delicate reality, the fate of Alejandro's relatives and his life with the Reis. From that point on, they began to look him up, trying to become a part of his life. "I had lived 26 years in peace until they showed up, and then I went crazy for two, three, four years," Alejandro said. "I was really annoyed that I could no longer live the life I had."

With Alejandro's identity firmly established, Victor had little chance of mounting a strong defense when the trial began in February 2009. He hoped that Alejandro, in testimony, would speak well of him. By that time, Alejandro said, he had began to drift from Victor and Arteach but decided to recount his happy childhood. "I could not deny that they were good parents," he said. He had hoped that Victor, too, would recount the reality of how he had come to raise Alejandro. But Victor argued that his motives had been the same as those of American families that adopted Vietnamese orphans during the Vietnam War.

"I'm being held illegally," he told the judge. "There is no precedent in the world, not even in Stalin's [Russia](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/world/countries/russia.html?nav=el), for someone to be tried for raising an orphan." Listening, Alejandro said he began to take in what had happened to his parents and how he had been adopted -- not to save him but because military officers knew they could have the babies of the disappeared. "You then begin to realize that the person who raised you was a participant in that situation," he recalled. "You feel everything: pain, anger, sadness, rage. Everything." The verdict was unforgiving: The former intelligence agent, now 69, received a 16-year term. Arteach was not tried, but Alejandro said he cannot have anything more to do with her.

"She opted to continue lying and hiding things from me, so you cannot have ties to a person who does that," he said. From that point on, Alejandro and his girlfriend, Julia Vera, have dedicated themselves to piecing together the past. They learned that his father, a union activist 12 years older than Fontana, had fallen in love with the soft-spoken girl after being introduced by one of her brothers. The two had been preparing a garage apartment for the life they planned to share with the coming baby. Alejandro thinks he would have enjoyed growing up with them. He has tried to make up for his lost life, he said, by forging a tight bond with his grandparents. On a recent day, he arrived at their home and was showered with hugs and kisses. Deharbe de Fontana said she cannot get over how much her grandson resembles her daughter -- especially his big, round eyes. "My daughter would be happy," she said.

Alejandro, who now has a bureaucratic position in the federal government, said he has come to terms with what happened to him and who he is. In December, he provided a blood sample to authorities and his DNA was once again tested. The tests came back positive. He was told on Dec. 21, Liliana Fontana's birthday. The finding means Alejandro can legally change his name. "The only thing now left," he said, "is to change the identity card to say I am Alejandro Pedro Sandoval Fontana."