

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Environment and Public Affairs Committee](#)
Subject: Submission to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs" Inquiry into past forced adoptive policies and practices - Abraham Maddison
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Attachments: [Forced Adoption Submission Abraham Maddison.docx](#)

Attached is the cover letter for my submission to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs' Inquiry into past forced adoptive policies and practices

My inquiry submission is my book *CRAZY BASTARD - A Memoir of Forced Adoption*. Five copies of it have been delivered to the committee today, one for each committee member.

Please contact me if you require any further information.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Abraham Maddison – WA forced adoption inquiry submission

My name is Abraham Simon Maddison. I was born in Subiaco on 3 May, 1972 at King Edward Memorial Hospital to Joye Maddison, an 18-year-old unwed Catholic mother who had run away from home, aged 16. She was permitted to hold me once before I was isolated from her, pending my adoption.

KEMH records for child 36112 show only two observations in the first 27 days of my life: “doing well, continue feeds”, and “big appetite”. “PASSED FOR ADOPTION” was stamped beneath these words on 30th May.

I spent 70 days in a plastic tub, awaiting the assignment of married parents deemed appropriate by the State of Western Australia, which also supplied them with a new birth certificate bearing the new name of their choice. I was taken to Broome, where a social worker checked on me only once after my adoption. My mother was assured I would be told about my adoption. I was not.

To be absolutely clear: I was stolen from my mother at birth, stripped of my identity, assigned a number, and handed to strangers who gave me a fake identity and lied to me about my origins. This process was facilitated and endorsed by the state of Western Australia.

In the days and hours after I was taken from my mother, she wrote a letter that finally arrived in my letterbox in Adelaide in 2018. The visceral truths in that document prompted me to quit journalism in 2020 to seek answers about myself and my mother and the troubled, separate lives that we both endured, and to write a book about it, titled *CRAZY BASTARD – A Memoir of Forced Adoption*.

It’s been a difficult journey. I ended up broke, unemployed, depressed and without a publishing contract. I could not get a job collecting supermarket trolleys. I had a breakdown.

I got a job in a newsroom again and kept writing, editing and believing that this story was bigger than me. For every crushing setback, there was a breakthrough or life-affirming discovery.

I FOied the hell out of my life, and my mother’s, and uncovered damning evidence about how my mother was treated by the State of Western Australia, and the lifelong negative impacts of adoption trauma on both of us, and those closest to us.

The first draft of my book contained significantly more academic research on adoption, but first readers and editors said it created narrative “roadblocks”. So I pared back the words of others and focused on documenting how adoption damaged the core of my being.

In the 2013 National Apology for Forced Adoptions, Julia Gillard told Australia that we must face the negative features of our past without hesitation or reserve. I took those words and made them the mission statement for my book.

I spent thousands of hours sourcing, analysing and collating every conceivable piece of information I could find about myself and my mother, through FOI applications, diaries, personal documents, videos, data and interviews with families, friends, colleagues and former partners. I used my skills as a journalist and writer to shape this vast amount of information into a narrative, to help make sense of it all.

This book is my submission to the inquiry, because it speaks directly to its terms of reference. I have supplied five copies of it, to give each committee member the opportunity to read it.

The coping strategies and behaviours I engaged in to deal with the pain of adoption trauma have damaged my health. In my twenties, I could've died more times than I care to remember because of depression and alcohol abuse. Like so many adoptees and mothers, my mental health and emotional pain reached points that were simply unbearable. It is hardly surprising that research (*Risk of Suicide Attempt in Adopted and Nonadopted Offspring*, 2013, Keyes et al) shows that adoptees are four times more likely to commit or attempt suicide.

It is only through sheer luck that I am not another adoptee suicide statistic.

Across my 51 years, I have been plagued by multiple addictions, obsessions, compulsions, depression, self-hatred, self-harm, anxiety, suicide attempts and dysfunctional relationships. My psychologist says the behaviour I exhibited in my twenties "ticks most of the boxes" for borderline personality disorder. She also diagnosed me with limerence, an obsessive disorder directly linked to the severing of the bond with my mother.

In researching my book, I revisited every major romantic relationship of my life and the women involved (with the exception of my ex-wife, to protect our children's welfare.) None of those went well for me because of my attachment style and mental health issues.

Each of these women reviewed what I wrote and offered comments/corrections, and I edited accordingly. My second marriage has somehow survived this minefield.

The book's March 2023 launch coincided with the 10th anniversary of the National Apology for Forced Adoptions, and I have delivered it to Ms Gillard, then WA Premier Mark McGowan, SA Human Services Minister Nat Cook (also an adoptee) and federal Human Services Minister Amanda Rishworth. I am still hoping for responses from each of them.

I am fortunate that being a journalist and writer gave me a voice and I hope that my book resonates with mothers and adoptees and informs the work of the committee.

I would like to acknowledge and express deep gratitude for the tireless work over many years by the mothers of ARMS WA, Adoption Jigsaw, and Jennifer McRae, whose petition led to this inquiry.

I would welcome the opportunity to give evidence to the committee from Adelaide or, if the committee deemed it appropriate and necessary, I could travel to Perth.

I want truth-telling and justice for the wrongdoings and redress for all those who were irreparably harmed by adoption.

I want acknowledgment that the system broke me as an infant, and I had to fix myself as an adult.

I want the State of Western Australia to set aside funds to allow adoptees to access specialised counselling and therapies from experienced practitioners. Too many of us have had to struggle through our lives unsupported or with inadequate supports.

The largest cohort of Australian adoptees are now middle-aged. Many others are experiencing, or will experience, the same mental health crises I have as a direct result of adoption trauma.

Personally, I have benefited immensely from the Dialectical Behavioural Therapy, which teaches people how to live in the moment, develop healthy ways to cope with stress, regulate their emotions, and improve their relationships. In my local health region in Adelaide, it is available through the public health system to people who fit diagnostic criteria.

I want my identity back. I am Abraham, not Derek. I want the “Not For Official Use” stamp removed from my birth certificate and I want the adoption stamp erased. I do not want to have to go through messy court discharge proceedings. The State erased my identity. I want it restored.

And what about the adoptees out there who still don't know they're adopted? I found my court order at age 15. Albany adoptee Danae Witherow found out at 50. How many more of us were lied to, and still don't know the truth? What does the State of Western Australia owe those people and their families?

The State and National Apologies we received were earnest, heartfelt and well-meaning. Finally watching the national apology for the first time in 2018 was a cathartic moment for me, and I was proud of my home state of Western Australia for being the first to say sorry.

But without meaningful action – and there really hasn't been any – these words are reduced to motherhood statements.

I am grateful that the state of WA is giving all mothers and adoptees the chance to be heard through this inquiry. I fervently hope it listens to our voices, properly evaluates the vast body of evidence we present, and takes action to acknowledge our trauma and, for those of us who remain, heal it.

As an adoptee, my painful but cathartic journey writing CRAZY BASTARD has brought me healing because I found the courage to uncover and accept difficult truths.

As a journalist, extensive research has confirmed what I knew in my bones - that adoption is trauma, and that this state and this nation owe the mothers and children of forced adoption so much more than an apology.

In submitting my book, I would like to draw your attention to two letters written by my mother, Joye Maddison, and a short extract from CRAZY BASTARD which summarises Joye's mental health file from the years immediately after I was taken from her.

1. *Joye Maddison's letter to Abraham, May 1972-73*
2. *Short extract from Crazy Bastard featuring quotes from Joye Maddison's Graylands Hospital records from 1973-74*
3. *Joye Maddison's letter to Post Adoption Resource Centre, May 1998*

Joye Maddison's Letter to Abraham, 1972-73

How do I begin to describe or even explain what has happened over the last 9 months. My emotions were mixed with love, happiness, sadness and fright. When I first began to realise I may be carrying a child I just thought it was my imagination, and I proved that my periods would come. But of course they didn't. It must have been gods will for me to have a child his child. But still I would not face up to it. I felt very alone and afraid and I used to pray to God to help me. I still went back up to Darwin trying desperately not to think about what growing inside me. Darwin was my thing, but I knew I couldn't stay there forever. The nights on beach by myself were beautiful. The sounds of the waves, the smell of the air The sand that I lay upon was so comforting during my times of loneliness and fright. And when I was out on the boat although I was as sick as a dog I didn't really care because I seemed to live in a small world of my own with just god, the understanding ocean and nature. I would sit on deck at night and just look and remember the calm sea was my closest friend other than god. Gods tiny creatures in sea seemed to talk to me, for they are peaceful and loving.

I must interrupt the story here as I am going to see my baby son Abraham. I am really frightened. God please help me and forgive me for I know he is your child not mine. I am siting here just waiting for them to me I can see Abraham. Just thank god our child that we will see for the first time. And never to see him again please look after him and tell him I do love him even though I am not going to keep him. He will remain in my heart always my love and thoughts are his. God help him to forgive me for what I am doing to him. Do you think I am doing the right thing not keeping our child. Please answer me in your own way and which ever way you decide I know it will be for the best. Just give me a sign for you are the only one who ever help me. I know you have a lot of children to look after, but please help our child Abraham Simon. They didn't come afterward to get me. They don't want me to see my baby. I think of our baby son constantly. I want to keep him so badly, but I don't know if that is the right thing to do. Even now I feel alone and frightened. Give me strength to carry on which ever way I decide and we decide.

I am now in need great need of something, but I don't know want. Maybe it is self pity, but I don't feel sorry for myself so what am I in need of. Please help me.

Well my dear son Abraham Simon I have finally seen you. You are really beautiful and I really love you so much I cannot put it into words. Please forgive my son for what I have done and what I am doing to you. Only hope I am doing the right thing for you. I remember you when you were so much smaller. Oh boy could you kick, and kick a lot. But that only reminded me that you were alive and growing with so much love. You didn't even cry or open your eyes. Didn't you want to see your Mum. Yes Abraham I am your Mum and I love you deeply please don't forget me, for I will never ever forget you or your sweet peaceful loving face. Please think of me, and when you are grown up please come and see me when you grow up to be a fine young man. Abraham please do one more think, love your new Mummy and Daddy who ever they my be. I am sure they will really love you, because you see Abraham they probably can't have any little boys or girls of their very own so please try and make them as happy as possible.

I think I should tell you something about your father. This is very sad because I didn't love him in the way that I should have, but after all he is your father. He doesn't even know that he has a son. I know I don't deserve your forgiveness but please forgive me my beautiful son. I

cannot repair the damage that I have don't. I hope with all my heart that you do understand. I have asked God to look over you and take care of you. I know he will. Have faith and love all. Abraham I feel so very close to you at this moment my heart is full of love and also of so much sadness. Yes there is a song on radio at the moment. "First Ever I saw you face. Yes I will never forget you gently serene face. What more can I say my son. Only that I love you so much it hurts and fills me with sadness.

I just want to die because I don't think I could go on without you the beside me. Help me my son. Help me.

How are you feeling today my son. You were out in the sun today, but I didn't see you.

I want you more than ever now, so please help me Abraham. As I need you so badly. Tomorrow I will come and see you and cuddle you. And I am very glad that you will at least feel the warmth and love of my arms. Please don't forget the feel of your mothers arms as I am terrible sorry and sad that it will be the only cuddle or feel that I will give you. Please forgive me Abraham, I know it will be very hard for you for you to forgive me for what I am doing to you. I love, I love, I love my son please don't forget me for I shall never ever forget you. My love you for is gently, sweet, peaceful passionate and so deep, but also sad, burning love at the same time I just don't what I am going to do without you.

Goodnight my son, my only man. Yes you are asleep now. For there is peace in loving, and believe me it comes from the heart. For you Abraham are all of my heart. Love me, please LOVE ME even thought I don't deserver your love.

This time 1 week ago I was beginning to have you. But I was selfish because I couldn't take the pain that you were giving me so they had to drug me up. Forgive me for not allowing you to come natural. It is now 9.15 you were really on the way then, you really wanted to see the world. I can't quite remember exactly what was happening at this time, so please forgive me once again. Only 10 minutes and you will in the world, but not my world, I am so sorry Abraham. Only 3 minutes until you are born. How beautiful yet how very saddening for us both in a way. Your head is through and you have begun life, but I have only given you love to start life with. You have left me now, but you are still with me so very, very much. I love you my precious Abraham. For your love, beauty, warmth and everything keeps me going in a way. But it makes me die to know I can't have you. I can feel you now beside me, ever so near to me. Remember Abraham just love, love, and keeping on loving and life will be beautiful for you. For that is what I will try and do. But my love for you is stronger than anything. Goodnight beautiful I will see you tomorrow. Believe it or not I am very frightened to see you. Because I know Abraham that if I see or even hold you that I will never give you up. Tomorrow I am going to the place were I will give you away. Yes, give you away because I can't keep Abraham. Your world well always be my world, my life my reason for living. Please try and understand that I do love you deeply and I do want you more than anything, but it is impossible to keep you. I am going to ask the sister if I can see you again and cuddle you.

I will see you soon. I am deeply sorry that I didn't see you today, but I was so frightened to see my beautiful son Abraham. I am finding it harder and harder not to be able to keep you. I will always be lonely without you to give me strength. But knowing that you are alive and healthy give me the will to live. But not know what is going to you really saddens me.

Do you love your other Mummy and Daddy, just keep on loving everything and everybody because God is all.

My dear God, I haven't forgotten you because when I speak with our son I also talk to you. Dear God help our son and all to love and keep on loving. My thoughts are so much, but words cannot express them. I hope God that you will care for our son.

My dear son yesterday the 12th/5/72 I gave you away so please please forgive me for that seemed to me to be the only human thing to do. But with every breath that I take I will pray that you are being loved and cared for. But there will always be someone who loves you deeply and is constantly thinking of you.

How is my beautiful son today. We did see each other. I desperately need your love, and want you. I know now that you want me, need me and I hope you love me. Perhaps if I begin tomorrow to explain how I felt when we were together. My heart my whole being was overwhelmed with love and so many more things Abraham why am I doing this to you and to myself. I just can't work anything out anymore. But there is one thing that I do know for certain and that is my love for you will never die. That moments I spent with you are every so precious to me and I will treasure them always. My mind Abraham is so mixed, do you mind if I speak to you with my mind, for that way you might understand me better, and try and forgive me for what I have done to you. For it is not goodnight for we are always talking and loving together as one.

Hi Abraham, how are you today, I hope with all of my heart, that you are happy. For I feel so very down and out, I think most of it is because of you. I want to keep you, so much it hurts me to even think about it. It is not to late to change my mind about keeping you, but please understand why I am not going to keep you. I am trying to do the right thing for you but am I doing the right thing for you. I know you love me for I can feel your love. My love for you is so strong that it is tearing me apart bit by bit, but I don't care anymore just so long as you loved, happy and giving love. Everything is becoming too much for me for I just can't go on anymore. My mind is like a ball of tangled string not being able to find the beginning. Don't get the impression that I don't care about your or anybody or anything. My whole being is so screwed up. I just want to run away from everything. In other words I am a coward and I just want to die. That is what I am a selfish coward. Abraham I will pray that you are strong and that you can handle everything that comes your way. Please forgive me God for not going on but I can't anymore. Watch over all and let there be love and peace in this screwed up world. I know I am not the only one with hangups, but I am not stronger enough to go on. Forgive me my son and God.

Hi Abraham. I've been thinking about you so much lately I just had to write a few lines to you. Every day it seems to get worse. I don't think I can handle it much longer. Why did I ever make such a mistake? Why Why. You are nearly seven months old now. I only pray that you loved by your new Mummy and Daddy. The thought of you calling someone else Mummy really hurts me a lot. Them calling you their son Wow Abraham it really sounds so unreal – it just isn't so. I still can see you now the day I nursed you. Love and happiness shone from your eyes. Abraham what are we going to do. I feel so lonely and lost. I know that you think of me and love, but I feel so hassled about everything else. I am so screwed up I

just don't know what I am going to do. Please give me strength as I am trying to give you. Ab I ask one thing of you please try and find me when you are able for I will be searching for you until there is no more time. Goodnight – God Bless. Keep You and Love You.

27/6/1973

My dear son, my thoughts are constantly of you. Time has passed, your grown, I try to accept and understand what has happened. I find it so very hard. I may write many words, cry many tears, I see sunshine sometimes, but you are with me always. By now you will be saying Mummy,

Hi Abraham, well my son you are really gone now. Yes, yesterday was the final D day for me, and I thought it was Friday and I suddenly realised that 11/6/1972 was Sunday. I really don't know how say sorry to you for I am sure now that I have made a mistake I shall never forgive myself for what I have done. Please forgive me, and I shall keep searching for you until I find, and I only hope that one day we shall meet and so that I can say many more things too. I know you will never fully forgive me completely. But my son, please love your knew mother and father, I only hope that they are beautiful parents to you. Never, Never shall I forgive myself for what I have done.

Dear God, I know I have sinned, but I sincerely ask for forgiveness. But I can't even forgive myself. Please, Please take care of him and tell him I do love him dearly. For I ask one thing now. Please guide us both so that one day we shall meet and love, but not forget, for I know I can never forget or forgive myself for what I have done.

Life now to me is so empty and useless. But knowing Abraham that you are alive and loving I will continue to live and love.

My words are endless for you, my thoughts are constantly of you. Hoping and praying that you shall find eternal happiness and love. Have faith my son and love and you can't go wrong.

My son I hear your cry, I am with you there beside you. I will always be there My love for you is so deep it hurts, But remember my son, we will always be one. God has given me something so beautiful, that he would never take it away. You my son. Goodnight my son, have faith for I am with you.

My dear son, so many things have happened since I last wrote to you. You are constantly on my mind, I ask myself so many questions but there are no answers. My heart grieves for you, I want you with me so much.

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Extract from CRAZY BASTARD, featuring comments from Joye Maddison's Graylands Hospital records, 1973-74:

In 2021, I finally gain access to more documents that shed new light on Joye's life. One of them is her mental health record. It is taken from microfiche and is variously patchy, illegible, or partly redacted.

The first document is a report to a court, written by a doctor to a probation officer. It is dated 27 December 1973. I am gobsmacked by the harsh, judgmental language that describes my grieving mother, twenty months after she was forced to surrender me:

This young woman is a patient here and is currently undergoing psychiatric and psychological evaluation. She has a severe character disorder such that she is unable to form normal interpersonal relationships and maintains a very borderline social adjustment. She is an isolated, aimless individual who finds difficulty in conforming to social standards and tends to disguise her ineffectuality as eccentricity.

Many of the extensive handwritten notes have reproduced poorly and I can only make out frustrating fragments. An entry dated 10 December 1973 begins:

An unhappy and maladjusted young woman who is pregnant for the second time and wants an abortion. Also has been on a drug charge for a second time and will probably have her probation extended. Now complaining of depression and mental problems. No major psychiatric disorder. Depression is reactive. Present admission is largely manipulative. Personality disorder. Admitted for assessment. Therapeutic abortion – may not be therapeutic in a girl with unresolved guilt over the loss of previous baby.

But the abortion proceeds. On 23 January 1974, a doctor writes: *Maddison is ready for discharge but doesn't have anywhere to go. Doesn't seem very motivated to look for work and accommodation.*

This girl's prognosis would not seem very good. Has all the signs of a progressive skid row drift. Doesn't have many personal strengths that would make her suitable for psychotherapy. At this stage it has to be accepted as a neurotic personality disorder for whom intermittent support will be required. Will probably cope reasonably well in a fringe group. Further pregnancies and drug use likely.

On 5 February 1974, another entry states: *This 20-year-old girl presented with 'everything getting on top of her', feeling depressed, unable to sort out her manifold problems.*

She came from a poor family background and in her history, evidence of a repetitive pattern of maladjustment in her lifestyle.

This caused her periodic personal crises. She had been put on probation for smoking marijuana and was now facing a similar charge . . . therapeutic abortion was carried out although there were reservations about the 'therapy' of this manoeuvre. Her drug charges resulted in further probation. After her 'problems' were taken care of, she was keen to leave the hospital.

Wasn't it a true blessing that the compassionate, righteous authorities had the good sense and moral fortitude to seize vulnerable little Abraham from his wanton teenage-runaway mother? Because look what she went and did. Exactly what they feared. The hippie slut was taking

drugs and sleeping around and she'd gone and got herself knocked up again. Now she's crying crocodile tears and yet again, wants the government to solve all her problems. Typical. She'll do it again, too. Just wait and see.

At the time, the view that married couples could provide better opportunities for newborns was so widely held that The Medical Journal of Australia published the opinion that 'most unmarried mothers . . . are more likely to be poor, undernourished, and of low intelligence, if not actually retarded'.

Post adoptive reactions of the relinquishing mother: a review, (Askren, Bloom, 1999) identified a grief reaction unique to relinquishing mothers.

'Although this reaction consists of features characteristic of the normal grief reaction, these features persist and often lead to chronic, unresolved grief,' the authors found.

Their analysis of twelve studies of relinquishing mothers found they were at risk of long-term physical, psychological, and social repercussions.

The researchers also noted that the earliest study they could find on the impact of adoption on relinquishing mothers was 1978. Until then, no one had thought to check on them.

On 14 January 1974, another Graylands psychologist took an entirely different view of the young woman he met, describing her as a warm-hearted person who was 'completely normal and well-adjusted'.

That same year, The Canberra Times reported that Mr G. Aves, who was the WA Department of Community Welfare's chief of welfare services, had 'instanced the cases of young unmarried mothers requesting that their children be fostered rather than adopted on the chance later that they might want to have them back'. He said this was 'pure selfishness' on the part of the mothers and was 'certainly not in the best interests of the child'.

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I learn all this through the history lesson of researching this book. Before that, I don't have the knowledge, the tools or the compassion to properly understand Joye's pain and anger. I don't absorb her sense of rejection, or her grief and guilt for her stolen baby, or the crushing disappointment at meeting her sad, fat, drunk, crime-obsessed son. Nor the titanic battles she's facing at work with asshole Outback men, or the guilt and pain she carries over a 'decision' she made as a frightened, cornered, vulnerable teenager who had no one to turn to – and no other options.

I don't understand the world she lived in, during a time when harsh prejudice and hypocritical moral judgment still reigned supreme in Australia. A world where it was perfectly acceptable to steal newborns from young mothers and give them to married couples deemed more deserving. A world where a grieving mother was repeatedly turned away when she tried to reclaim her baby and treated like dirt when her psyche collapsed under the all-consuming burden of the grief and pain she carried, but never shared. A world that stole her right to be a mother – and my right to be Abraham, her son.

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Joye Maddison's Letter to Post Adoption Resource Centre, May 1998:

Dear people at PARC,

I've been subscribing to your newsletter for a number of years. I am a birth mother. My son searched for and found me about three and a half years ago. This was done through Jigsaw in WA. I subscribe to their newsletter.

I'm writing to tell you my story but also the problems I experience because I live in a remote and isolated area. The latter issue first.

I have lived and worked in Kakadu for 15 years. Most of this time has been spent living away from the town of Jabiru. A lot of my work has been solitary but personally very rewarding.

Since I have been 'found' I've acquired a reasonable library of books related to adoption issues – plus subscribing to you and Jigsaw.

I've been desperately trying to work my way through the overwhelming emotional chaos I find myself in constantly since my son found me.

I read, I read, but the pain and lack of right action remain.

There are no PARC or Jigsaw agencies up here in Darwin – I tried your phone counselling service a few years ago but it was of little help so I didn't try again. (The counsellor seemed preoccupied

with other things – she did not invite me to call back – perhaps it was a bad day for her.)

I'm a very independent person and pride myself on being able to work things out myself. But with this issue, I am at a dead end.

This issue affects most areas of my life. Can you help.

Briefly my story. My son was born in 1972 in Perth. I was 18.

For family and cultural (European) reasons my son was adopted.

My family (except for one sister) were unaware of my situation.

I had been a runaway and returned to Perth to have the baby and reconcile with my family (who lived in the country.) I became a drug addict for a while and continued my gypsy lifestyle in Australia.

I lost it a few times and at one time I had a brief stay in a mental institution.

My father died in 74 (which I blamed myself for). My mother died in 80, and my brother committed suicide in 85. I have two older sisters (I'm 45 years). I never married or had children and

I also had two abortions. I did try to find my son a few times but the door was closed.

Eventually I found my space in the NT. I received a letter from Jigsaw late in 1994. I was shocked. I responded and said I was happy for him to contact me. I was unprepared.

I sent him a plane ticket and we had a reunion in January 95 – all appeared to go well. He had not been told he was adopted but found out accidentally when he was 14. Enclosed is the story

he wrote for The West Australian. He was a journalist there at the time. He had an alcohol problem.

(I had also previously had this problem, also my father and brother) and had depression problems. I felt a lot of guilt seeing him – the state he was in. I tried to rescue him.

His parents were not supportive of his search or find. I was angry with them. He was an only child. He was on the phone constantly to me – often out of it. He wrote his story with my reluctant consent and his parents'. But I know he had to do this. I am a very private person and found his publication very difficult.

My sisters knew of our reunion but the extended family didn't. It was a shock for most people when they read his story. But the reaction was positive, except everyone had this idea that it is [a] 'happy ever after' finish.

The phone calls of a desperate nature continued with many threats of suicide on his part. He was admitted to a mental institution and placed on pills. Also threats from his parents to get it together. I continued to feel responsible for his pain. I flew him up here again.

His drinking got worse (also secret drinking.) I told him how I had had alcohol problems and how I got myself free of it.

In fact told him too much of my past lives. Treated him as an equal instead of as a person who needed outside help though I had suggested lots of ways for him.

I was having 'backlash' problems at work and stress of this and my son started to get to me.

While he was visiting, he would tell everyone who he was. I understood and knew I had to let this secret out. But it was hard.

He was running my life. I knew it was right to let the child express themselves. He would say he wasn't angry with me. I would ask him – how are you 'feeling' – he didn't know – his depression and drinking appeared to be my problem.

I talked him into finding a job somewhere else. He got a job in Adelaide but still his problem continued – a few times again in mental institutions and on pills again.

All of the Adelaide stories were for me only – plus he was gambling and buying women. I visited him there. He was ok and was making attempts to stay dry. But this never lasted.

I realised his problems were not mine. He was consuming me. I had tried every way to rescue him – had contacted numerous adoption people in Adelaide. I knew what his problems were but could not solve them for him. He was acting out his rage against me but had no idea that this is what he was doing.

To rescue myself in the short term, I started to withdraw.

(He had been testing me out etc). I explained very carefully what I had to do. I continued to write to him but not including anything personal.

I suppose I was going through a grieving process. I could not have my child back. And always his parents are there. Protected and unknowing. I let him go. But he didn't like my way through.

I continued to explain – 'don't take it personally – I have to work through my own stuff'. He wouldn't write and occasionally phoned to hear my voice.

I was angry with him for a few reasons. He had promised to visit but never did. He always went to Perth instead. He never told his parents I was visiting when I stayed with him in Adelaide. He

didn't want to upset them.

I understand most of his reactions/behaviour – he had a lot of bases to cover. But I still must work through my reactions.

He often contacted my family. I was not rejecting him, as he accused me of a few months back. All his phone calls were alcohol-related.

Currently we are re-establishing a relationship. We saw each other in Perth recently. I know I must keep my 'stuff' to myself.

Be positive and supportive to him without becoming involved. My main concern is for his welfare and I know how easily he can lose it so I am careful.

I see him as a child still growing and there are many things he has to work out but only time (patience) and maturity will assist. Most times I don't want to know – I regret he ever found me but there is no way of getting out of it now.

I struggle carrying him as my financial responsibility, particularly since the 70s welfare state made it clear I had no rights. Yes, the guilt lives on.

This is written with much pain and only once.

Joye Maddison

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