

To: Forced Adoption Enquiry

ADOPTION and its CONSEQUENCES. Written by Kavita Diana Forman

My mother, [REDACTED], was born out of wedlock to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in Belsize Park (now Hampstead), London. [REDACTED] met each other in Western Australia when [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. It is not known if their affair began there or when they were both in London some years later.

At the time of [REDACTED] birth, her father was married with four children and lived not far from [REDACTED] in the same London suburb. [REDACTED]

Her mother was separated from her husband, [REDACTED], a grazier from [REDACTED] in Western Australia. [REDACTED] was suffering from long-standing depression and in an asylum for mental illnesses in Outer London for 20 years.

When [REDACTED] was born, [REDACTED] paid [REDACTED] a large sum of money towards upkeep of the child, insisting all contact between him, [REDACTED] and the child cease. It is known that [REDACTED] became aware of his wife's new child because, at his death, [REDACTED] birth certificate was found among his papers and he was listed as the child's father, for propriety's sake.

[REDACTED] had two older children with [REDACTED], and with [REDACTED] lived in various addresses in England before temporarily returning with the children to Western Australia. At this point, [REDACTED] was five years old, and it appears that [REDACTED] returned to Australia to have her youngest child adopted.

There was a lot of secrecy and lying about the new child. [REDACTED] said she was the child of her brother and his wife, who were deceased. She called [REDACTED] by her maiden name, [REDACTED], in order to keep up this story. It was a great shame to have a child born out of wedlock. By this time, [REDACTED] money was running out and she got a job as a housekeeper to [REDACTED]. She was able to live in his house with her three children. When he died, [REDACTED] was able to live on in his house for a year. [REDACTED] was basically forced to give up her child due to prevailing attitudes to illegitimate children, lack of money and support and resources.

During this time, [REDACTED] let it be known she was looking to find a place to house her 'niece', because she was no longer able to care for an extra child. Her [REDACTED] relatives were quite concerned because [REDACTED] said she would have to place [REDACTED] in an orphanage, if it were not possible to find adoptive parents. The [REDACTED] were horrified at this idea, and asked around to see if any of their friends could help. One of the [REDACTED] brothers, [REDACTED], had a friend, [REDACTED], a lawyer from Perth who lived in [REDACTED] in the Great Southern. [REDACTED] and his wife [REDACTED] were unable to have children due to a mismanaged miscarriage early in their marriage but they wanted a child. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] organized the adoption very informally, but legally for the time – [REDACTED]

The five year old [REDACTED], who in later years could well remember her mother and two siblings, was sent by train from Albany to Wagin, where she was met by her new 'parents' at the railway station. I am assuming the only way she could go willingly is that she was told she was going on a holiday. At the age of five, she must have been devastated when her mother [REDACTED] never collected her. After a few months, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] returned to [REDACTED], because [REDACTED] wanted a more social life.

[REDACTED] grew up an only child with the [REDACTED]. Her adoptive father was very kind to her until her adolescence when he would 'brook no nonsense' and became quite strict. When she was older, [REDACTED] reverted to a loving father. Her adoptive mother, who suffered from Munchausen's by Proxy, was cruel and never showed [REDACTED] any love, insulted her, often reminded her she was "a bastard", said she was so ugly she would never marry and have children. She often reminded [REDACTED] that she would have gone into an orphanage if it weren't for the [REDACTED] adopting her. [REDACTED] had kind family friends' farms to stay on for holidays and went to a 'good' girls' school where she excelled but she could never understand why her birth mother had left her.

The sorrow [REDACTED] experienced never left her. Even when she was near death in her 99th year she said that the anger had driven her all her life. Her experience affected the way she treated her own children. When they were adults themselves, she said she'd never been loved so didn't know how to love. She was physically and emotionally undemonstrative, beat her children for 'misbehaviour' until they were into adolescence, often denigrated them and was generally very inconsistent in her behaviour towards them. She needed complete control and her gentle, long-suffering husband had a battle protecting his children from her outbursts of anger and harshness.

As one of [REDACTED] children, I certainly was affected by her harsh treatment of me, which I now understand was to do with her own terrible childhood and not to do with any intrinsic 'wrong' in me.

This outline shows how adoption has devastating and long-lasting effects on the adoptee and their own later families.