

CLANN: IRELAND'S UNMARRIED MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN: GATHERING THE DATA

Statement of Witness 14

Reference Code:	CLANN/WIT14
Status:	Natural Father
Institution(s)/Agencies:	St Anne's Adoption Society, Cork; Good Shepherd Mother and Baby Home (Árd Mhuire) Dunboyne, Co Meath; National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street; Adoption Board; Southern Health Board Adoption Department.
Date:	6 th February 2017
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WITNESS STATEMENT OF [REDACTED]

I, [REDACTED] of [REDACTED]

WILL SAY:

1. I make this statement for the purpose of providing evidence to the Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation established by the Irish Government pursuant to Section 3 of the Commissions of Investigations Act 2004.
2. I make this statement as the natural father of an adopted person.
3. Unless indicated to the contrary, matters to which I refer in this statement are within my own knowledge and are true. Where they are not within my own knowledge, they are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.
4. In this statement, I refer to the attached exhibit marked [REDACTED]. References in this statement to page numbers are to pages in [REDACTED].

Circumstances of the time leading up to and after my son's birth

5. By way of information, I set out my family background leading up to the time I discovered I was to become a father.
6. I was born in 1959, the [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] children of my mother and father. My father was in the Irish army and died in [REDACTED]. My father had been the main breadwinner and left a wife (my mother) and the [REDACTED] children [REDACTED] of whom were adults at the time of his death).
7. In 1977, I was living at home with my mother, my youngest brother, my eldest brother and my second eldest sister. Financially things were tight but we managed.
8. I had a girlfriend who lived very close to us. Her family had a better lifestyle than us because her father was a [REDACTED].
9. In the late summer of 1977, my girlfriend announced to me that she had fallen pregnant and that we would be having a baby. I was 18 years old, and initially nervous at the prospect of becoming a father, but very soon I embraced the idea. My girlfriend and I talked things through and agreed that we would get married. We then started to look forward to the future and the arrival of our child.
10. We agreed to tell our respective families. I went and told my family and she went and told her family. However, after that I only saw her one more time and then suddenly she was no longer in contact; she had disappeared. I subsequently found out that both my mother and my eldest sister had spoken to my girlfriend's family and were told that my son would be adopted.

- 11 When I learned this, I didn't know where to turn so I began contacting adoption societies based in Cork to try to find out what was happening with my girlfriend and the baby. It was difficult to get a straight (or any) answer from them. As part of my search, my mother and I went to St Anne's Adoption Society (of Assumption Convent, Blackpool, Cork City) ("St Anne's"), [REDACTED] It was clear that St Anne's knew what was going on with my girlfriend, but they didn't ever confirm that they were handling the adoption.
12. Shortly after my and my mother's visit to St Anne's, I received a communication from a Reverend [REDACTED] (of St Anne's), asking me to meet him in the centre of Cork City. I had just finished my Leaving Certificate Examination and had got a job as an [REDACTED] with an [REDACTED] I obtained a letter from my employer to say that I was employed and I went to meet Rev. [REDACTED] prepared to show that I wanted my child, was capable of providing for my child and that my child didn't need to be and shouldn't be adopted. However, the meeting lasted only about 10 minutes, during which time Rev. [REDACTED] made it clear that the adoption society was in charge and he would not let me have any say in the matter.
13. Rev. [REDACTED] told me that my child, who at that time was yet to be born, would be taken for adoption and that there was absolutely nothing that I could do about it because I wasn't married to my girlfriend. He told me to just forget about it and to get on with my life. Even now, 39 years later, when I recall those words I get an overwhelming feeling of sadness and powerlessness.
14. I could not believe that a so called 'man of God' was telling me, very forcibly, that I would not be allowed to be a father to my own child and that I would never see my child. His words made no sense to me - this was my child and I was a good person from a good family and yet this man was telling me that none of this mattered.
15. Rev. [REDACTED] explained that I was only a "putative father". I asked him what that meant and he explained that I could not actually prove that I was the father of the child. This was notwithstanding that during our conversation he constantly referred to the baby as "your child". I asked him if my girlfriend had confirmed that I was the father and he said that she had and that, although he and everyone else involved knew I was the father, the point was that I could not prove it. That, combined with the fact that I wasn't married to my girlfriend, meant that I could do nothing to stop my child from being taken for adoption.
16. At the time my head was reeling and I felt physically sick, though afterwards, trying to make sense of it, it occurred to me that Rev. [REDACTED] was essentially taking a technical and probably legal point which was, at that time in Ireland, the fact that I and my girlfriend were not married meant that I didn't have any rights as a father.

17. I told him that I was to marry my girlfriend but he answered that my girlfriend's parents had advised that this would not be happening and that it was they who had approached St Anne's and Rev. [REDACTED] regarding adoption. I said that if my girlfriend, for whatever reason, had now decided that she didn't want to marry me then I would have to learn to live with that, but I could not accept that I would not be allowed to take care of, or at least be a part of, my own child's life; after all if my girlfriend was not to keep our child then surely I as the father would be the best person, and the person entitled, to take care of and love my child?
18. As I was leaving, in desperation, I asked for my name to be put on the birth certificate. I was again told that as I was the "putative father" and "not married" that therefore this would not happen.
19. I told my family what Rev. [REDACTED] had said. I had a very supportive family and the first thing my widowed mother did was to let my girlfriend's parents know that my family and I wanted to bring up the child and that there was no need whatsoever for the child to be given up for adoption. In response, they said that they would not agree to this and that the child would be given for adoption and neither I nor my family had any say in the matter. As it was made very clear that I would not be allowed to keep my child, my mother proposed that either she or my eldest sister (who was [REDACTED] years old at the time and married to a local businessman) were willing to adopt the child but again this suggestion was met with a resounding "no". My mother was heartbroken. She died a very young woman ([REDACTED] years old) just [REDACTED] years later.
20. In late 1977 or early 1978, I wrote to St Anne's asking to be put into contact with my girlfriend. I subsequently received a response from Rev. [REDACTED] which refused to provide me with this information (page 1).
21. Much later, I learned that some months before she was due to give birth, my girlfriend had been secreted away to a Mother & Baby Home somewhere up in the midlands or northern part of Ireland. I did not know exactly where she had gone. If I had known, I would have made it my priority to go to see her.
22. I didn't learn the details of my son's birth i.e. his original Christian names, date and actual place of birth until March 2005. I now know that my girlfriend was taken to Ard Mhuire Mother and Baby Home in Dunboyne, Co. Meath and my son was born on [REDACTED] 1978 at The National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street, Dublin. He was then put up for adoption.
23. However, at that time, with my girlfriend and child to be spirited away, I was devastated and could not believe what had happened and cried myself to sleep night after night. In my mind I had totally failed my child; I had failed to do the one fundamental thing that any

decent father does, which is to hold and take care of his own innocent and defenceless child.

24. I was choked with sadness and decided to leave Ireland in the summer of 1978 where I felt I had been disrespected, cheated and treated in a very cruel way by both the Catholic Church and the State. All of my attempts to be involved in the life of my son had been thwarted. I had been told that I had no rights to any say in what happened to my son. I didn't want to be anywhere near Ireland, or the Church, that had done this to me and my son. I went to live in the U.K. and tried to bury my pain but couldn't subdue it as it would come bubbling to the surface again. Being forcibly denied, for no good reason, the opportunity to know and raise your own child is for me one of the worst horrors that any person can face.
25. Some years later, in [REDACTED] I met the woman who became my wife. I felt that I had to take the risk of telling her about my son and how he had been taken in Ireland against my wishes and the issues that I suffered as a result. I told her on our second date and am so glad I did. I was very relieved that she was so sympathetic, understanding and supportive. I married the love of my life and we started our own family. On the surface everything was great - I had a beautiful wife, lovely kids and a good job, but still I had an underlying feeling of sadness that I could not shake off.
26. We regularly came to Ireland for summer holidays and on so many occasions I can remember looking at young boys around the same age as my son and wondering silently if any of them looked like me and was possibly mine. Whenever we moved house, I advised the adoption agency in Ireland (St Anne's) of my new address and let them know that I was still here for my son and always open to contact with him. All I ever got back from them were letters acknowledging that my new address was placed on the file. Other than that the door remained firmly closed and they would not give me any information whatsoever about my son or his well-being. Some of my correspondence can be seen at pages 2 to 10.
27. After so many years of feeling hopeless and continually trying to suppress the sadness that enveloped me as I could not get any information about my son, I knew that I had to find some way of finding out his new identity and whereabouts by myself. I had an overwhelming need to let him know how much he was wanted, how much he was loved and to explain to him how I lost him and that we were only "strangers" because of circumstances beyond our control.
28. I called St Anne's a number of times around 1999 and I asked if there was any way that I could be in contact with my son or get any information on him. At that time he was 21

years old and I was assuming or at least hoping that when an adopted person had passed the age of majority, that St Anne's would allow a natural parent to make contact.

29. Unfortunately I didn't have any success as when I contacted St Anne's they just advised again that it was not allowed for me to be put in contact with my son
30. I used to ring St Anne's and send letters, including one letter to a [REDACTED] who I was previously advised by St Anne's (when I wrote to them, and on the telephone, a number of times during 1997) was the relevant social worker that I should contact. I received a reply saying *"thank you for your letter of 18 February 1999 with your up to date information for your son's file; [REDACTED] is no longer working with St Anne's and I am unable to trace the file as you didn't give me your son's name or date of birth"* (page 7). This made me very angry, because I didn't know his name, and I didn't actually know his date of birth because St Anne's wouldn't tell me - nobody would tell me. It also made me feel helpless; my letters clearly set out my full name and contact details and from my later interactions with the bodies holding St Anne's records, which would have been enough to identify my son. Whichever way I tried to find information, St Anne's were unhelpful and/or obstructive. I did ask St Anne's on the phone once what his birthday was so I could have a quiet thought on that day but they wouldn't tell me that or anything else.
31. In 2005 there was a breakthrough as I met with an adoption support group who guided me as to how I could obtain a copy of my son's original birth certificate, showing his original first name(s), date and place of birth. This was precious information to a natural father such as me, who previously did not have it. This adoption support group had also found a way for birth parents to be able to find out the new identity of their children who were taken for adoption, via public records. This voluntary group, whose membership was made up of other birth parents and adoptees and which was not in any way connected to Church or State, also offered some very helpful tips as to how the current address of such adoptees could be located through various sources on the internet. I think it is important for me to add that this adoption support group provided support while always maintaining the importance of placing the interests of the adopted persons first. The group made it very clear that they were totally against and actively discouraged any natural parent attempting to make contact with any adoptee under the age of majority, even through an intermediary.
32. The process of tracing my son required a very close scrutiny of the Live Birth Register and the Index to the Adopted Children's Register (both of which are public records) followed by the application of a certain process of elimination
33. For the sake of clarity, I would mention the Index to the Adopted Children's Register is a public register whereas the actual Adopted Children's Register is held by the Adoption [REDACTED]

Authority of Ireland (previously known as the Adoption Board) and is not available to the public.

34. Therefore, I went to the General Registrars' Office ("GRO") in Dublin armed with the very little information that I did have and I followed the steps in the "tracing guide" given to me by the adoption support group, which enabled me to find out the original Christian and surnames, date and place of birth of my son as well as the new Christian names and surname that my son had been given following his adoption and the address of his adoptive parents at the time of his adoption. I now knew my son's new identity and through some further detective work and internet searches I was also able to determine his current address and even his phone number. Despite having obtained all of this information, I didn't want to contact him directly or to doorstep him and possibly cause him distress or get a bad reaction.
35. Rather than approach him directly, I asked for the assistance of the Health Service Executive ("HSE") Adoption Department, (which at the time was based at South Ring Business Park, Kinsale Road, Cork) and which was in possession of all of the adoption files that were previously held by St Anne's (having, I understand, taken over that role during 2005). I asked the HSE to please get in touch with my son to let him know that I wished to have contact with him.
36. Since this time, I have gained a lot of experience helping others with the tracing process and my experience was as follows. If you asked the authorities (for example HSE) to trace your child that was lost to adoption and to let him/her know that you would like to be in contact, invariably one would face very substantial delays, usually between two to three years and sometimes even longer, before they would allocate a social worker to meet with you for the first time to discuss the matter. Such a meeting with a social worker was only the first step of an even longer process, involving a number of meetings and significant time before any information was provided, or contact made.
37. I was advised that these long periods of delay were as a result of a lack of resources and manpower and that the process was even longer still when it was a natural father who asked for a trace, as the policy of the HSE was not to start the process until they had first made all reasonable efforts to trace and contact the natural mother to let her know of the natural father's request. This could cause even further delays and especially so if there were difficulties in making contact, eg. if the mother had emigrated to another country.
38. In my case, I had already done my own investigations and was able to supply to the HSE the contact details of my ex-girlfriend (i.e. my son's mother) who was living in [REDACTED] a fact that was not previously known to the HSE. By the admission of the HSE social worker, Ms [REDACTED] at a meeting in around April 2005, it would have taken them a [REDACTED]

very considerable period of time to have found this out and to obtain contact details for my ex-girlfriend.

39. I personally know of many cases where delays in completing a trace have resulted in a situation where, by the time the trace has been completed, the person(s) being sought (especially natural parents due to their age) have passed away in the interim period. The detrimental effects and huge grief that can be caused to the person who asked for the trace to be initiated in such cases clearly illustrate that time is of the essence. A delay can forever deny a person the opportunity of meeting the person(s) they so desperately wanted to contact.
40. Although the HSE were much more receptive than I had previously experienced with St Anne's, nevertheless they were still slow to get things moving. Therefore, in order to spur them into action and to avoid the usual long drawn out process, at my second meeting with them which I believe was around August 2005, I decided to tell them I was already aware of my son's new identity and his address and that I wanted their assistance but that if they did not get in touch with my son with my request for contact or delayed the process unnecessarily then I would ask a third party to make contact with him (as I would not have done it myself, due to my concern being always for him). This appeared to motivate the HSE to speed up the process and around two weeks after that conversation the HSE did contact my son and met with him. At this meeting the HSE delivered a letter which I had written to my son
41. As things turned out I was not introduced to my son by the HSE; he joined the same on line adoption support group as me and over time we realised that I was his father and, for the first time ever, we were finally in touch with each other, if only by email

MEETING MY SON

42. My son agreed to meet me at a hotel in the city where he lived. I don't know how I managed to drive to my first meeting with him. My legs were shaking and I was a nervous wreck. I got to the hotel early and booked a room for the night. I hadn't even met my son yet and I was already emotionally drained so I knew that there was no way I could drive home that night. I went to the hotel bar where we were to meet and waited. Ten minutes to go and each minute was like an eternity. Then he arrived. I could not believe that finally my boy was walking towards me. All the previous worries of what to do, say or how to greet him disappeared. He towered over me and instinctively we just hugged each other. Words cannot describe how happy I felt. We talked for a couple of hours and to my surprise, even though we were effectively strangers, it was not in the least bit awkward. It felt totally natural - a father having a pint and chat with his son. He told me all about his life and the wonderful adoptive parents that he had. I told him all the things

that I had so often dreamt of telling him such as how much loved he was and how wanted he always was. At last I was with my long lost son and I will hold onto that memory until the day I die.

- 43 We agreed to meet again soon and surprisingly when my son left and I went to my hotel room, I was overcome with an extremely deep feeling of sadness. Initially I couldn't quite work out why I felt that way as only moments before I was so happy. Then, I recognised that the reason for that sudden sadness was the realisation that I had lost 27 years with my son and that time could never be regained. The more I thought about it the sadder and angrier I became. There was no valid reason for my son to be adopted. I loved him, my family loved him and we would have done anything to have been able to raise and care for him. Yet, we had been denied 27 years together simply because I didn't have a Catholic marriage certificate when he was born. For this reason alone the Irish State, who in my opinion didn't have sufficient backbone to stand up to, and so were dictated to by, the Catholic Church, deemed him to be "illegitimate", which is a disgusting word to attach to any child. All children are legitimate human beings and whether born in or out of wedlock should be treated equally and be loved, cared for and raised by their parent(s). I was denied that right.
44. Considering all the facts I come to the conclusion that my son was stolen from me; kidnapped. I mean no disrespect to anyone and certainly not to my son's adoptive family, for whom I have the utmost respect, when I use that term, but it is the most accurate description of what the Catholic Church and the Irish State did to me and my son. They took my son for no justifiable reason - they did it simply because they deemed they could.
- 45 I am thankful that, unlike many others, I managed to trace and meet with my son and to share some lovely and precious times with him, which has meant the world to me. Unfortunately he is not in touch with me at present, which was his decision and one that I respect as I am very aware that a break in contact is quite a common occurrence in adoption reunions due to the emotive nature of reunion and the complex issues attached to it. I lost 27 years that I should have spent with my beautiful son and he with me. I will never get that time back and I can never forgive the Church or the State for that. To this day the loss of my son causes me great sadness and distress.

Experiences of St Anne's Adoption Society and the Irish State

46. The Adoption Board as an Irish State controlled entity and the religious institution St Anne's as an adoption agency run by the Catholic Church and accredited by the Irish State were responsible for the forcible adoption of my son against my will. When I talk below, about improvements in the conduct of any successor agencies it is against this backdrop. I address my experiences with the authorities chronologically as follows.

47. When I contacted Rev [REDACTED] asking where my girlfriend was so I could write to her and be in contact before our child was born; he just wrote back and claimed he was not at liberty to do that. He said he could only inform her that I was anxious to contact her, and that it was up to her to make the next move (page 1).
48. Around the time my son was born, people were very deferential to, almost afraid of, the Catholic Church, which had such a hold on Irish society. The Irish State was, in my opinion, just happy to let the Catholic Church get on with it. I was careful to be deferential and apologetic in my language when I contacted St Anne's (who were a Catholic organisation), even though they had taken my son against my will. I wrote to them and said I had moved address in [REDACTED] and requested them to please put my new address on file so that if my son ever wanted contact with me he would be able to and I was willing. I was told that St Anne's would never contact my son for me as it was not possible and that once the relinquishment forms were signed that all legal rights to the child were gone and there was no way back. Of course, I never signed any forms and I repeatedly and vociferously expressed my desire to raise my son and my objections to him being adopted.
49. When I talked to representatives of the Catholic Church or the Irish State I always did so in a very deferential way, such was my feeling of the great power and control that they held over me and the fear of what further possible consequences might occur if I was to speak my mind truthfully. In short, I was afraid of them – after all they had already taken my son for adoption against my will and there was nothing I could do about it and no one I could turn to for help, least of all the Irish State which did not recognise the rights of unmarried fathers. I didn't dare risk being perceived to be hounding these people by calling them every week or every month, but throughout the time since my son's birth I kept in contact with them, making sure to always keep my contact details regularly updated. I didn't know what was left to do. I felt I wasn't treated properly, or with respect. I was treated with disdain; I was told to go away; I was told that I had no rights. When I called St. Anne's Adoption Society I was always left with the distinct feeling that my call was not welcome and that I was nothing more than a source of annoyance to them, even though it might have been a year or 18 months since I last called. They would say, or give the impression of "how many times do we have to tell you, we cannot tell you anything about your son or connect you with him."
50. The adoption system as administered by the State and the adoption societies was a closed record system, with no access to information. For example, I wrote a letter to St Anne's and I asked them to please tell me anything about my son. I received a reply which said *"in relation to your request regarding having information, if something were to happen to your child we cannot guarantee we will inform you as we may not have access*

to this information ourselves. If you do by chance hear about a particular situation we would record it on file but this is very much a matter of chance" (page 5). I called and spoke with the social worker, a Ms [REDACTED] and asked her to inform me should anything happen to my son and she said that St Anne's would not do that. The wording in the letter sounds quite reasonable at first, but essentially it is telling you that if something serious happens to your child it will be kept from you.

51. I traced my son myself, because in my past dealings with St Anne's I was rebuffed repeatedly and also at that time the Adoption Board of Ireland, which was a State entity, were not willing to assist me or give me any information relating to my son.
52. The HSE took over the adoption files of St Anne's during 2005 and this improved things a little; however, even after this (in 2005) there were nevertheless very long delays before the HSE would even engage with you to discuss a possible trace. Further, there was a culture of "drip feeding" snippets of information over a long period of time, even non-identifying information, to those seeking information. From my conversations through Adoption Ireland and another support group [REDACTED] called "Know My Own" I understand that these were common experiences.
53. When I initially enquired in 2004 what the waiting list for tracing was at The Southern Health Board Adoption Department which was the predecessor of the HSE, I was told that generally speaking the waiting list was about two to three years before being able to see a social worker, depending on the specifics of the case in question. This would have been the first of many meetings before an adopted person or natural parent could be traced.
54. I asked my son after I met him what his experience with the HSE was. He told me they had contacted him and asked him to come to meet them in Cork to discuss a matter relating to his adoption. He told me that he attended that interview with them but he found the meeting to be very cold and official, and it put him off. I also asked him why he did not respond to my letter to him which was passed to him on my behalf via the HSE and he said that after the meeting with the HSE he did not wish to have any further contact with them and my letter did not contain my address or contact details, as the HSE had instructed me not to include any details in my letter which would enable my son to contact me directly (copy of my letter to my son at pages 11 to 13).
55. He then joined an on-line adoption support group, which I was also a member of and he managed to get in direct touch with me through that medium. By doing my own search for my son, I didn't have to face the long delays that I would have faced with the HSE. It took me around two days at the General Register Office in Dublin to find my son's new identity. It would have taken a lot longer relying on the Irish State.

56. My son told me that when he met with the HSE they told him that he had no right of access to his file as an adopted person but they did tell him that his birth father had always kept in touch and always wanted to know about him and his wellbeing. I would mention that the HSE also told me that I had no right of access to my son's adoption file and they wouldn't tell me anything that they knew about my son.
57. It makes me angry that the HSE had this information to hand but were willing to make me wait. My name wasn't on the birth certificate, but I know that the HSE and their predecessor the Southern Health Board had other records recording my being the father of my son, as they knew who my son was when I wrote to them. The Adoption Board (now known as the Adoption Authority of Ireland) also knew that I was the father of my son. I do not know what form these records take, but in all my searches I have not found the fact that I am my son's father recorded publically. This suggests that the State has these records and if only they had made these accessible I would have found my son sooner.
58. I believe the facts stated in this statement are true.

Signed

Date

6th FEBRUARY 2017

All redactions have been carried out by the Clann Project



Exhibit





St. Anne's Adoption Society

(Chairman: His Lordship, the Bishop of Cork and Ross)

Social Workers:

Secretary:

ASSUMPTION CONVENT,
BLACKPOOL,
CORK.

Tel. 52747

1978.

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter received some time ago. Sorry for the delay in replying. I have succeeded in locating [REDACTED] whereabouts, but I trust you will understand that I do not have the right to give you her address. This is something she will have to do herself. I have asked her social worker to inform her that you were anxious to contact her. The next move is really up to [REDACTED]

I can assure you that [REDACTED] is very happy where she is and you need have no worry in that regard. I trust you will understand that while we would like to help you, we do not have the right to reveal [REDACTED] whereabouts. We can only inform her that you are anxious to contact her. It is up to her to make the next move after that. She knows your address and she would have no difficulty in writing to you, if she so wishes. Her parents would be in no position to prevent her writing as she is well away from [REDACTED] and, therefore, has no contact with them except by letter. Hoping this information will be of some assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

(Rev.)

Private + Confidential
=====

St. Annes Adoption Society,
34 Paul Street,
Cork City,
Ireland.

Phone: [REDACTED]

Attention: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 1992.

Dear Ms. [REDACTED]

Firstly I would like to apologise for the delay in writing to you but I have been travelling abroad since we last spoke on the [REDACTED] 1992, when as you may recall I asked your advice and assistance regarding the adoption of a baby boy that I fathered and who was born in [REDACTED]. As requested, I give hereunder the sequence of events surrounding my relationship with the mother of the child and the adoption, as far as I can recall:

I was living at the time at [REDACTED] and had been courting a [REDACTED] (I beleive the house number was [REDACTED]), [REDACTED] for approximately 18 months or so. It was a close relationship and during the summer of 1977 [REDACTED] conceived our child. From the moment that we imparted the news of her pregnancy to her parents they tried to stop all contact between [REDACTED] and myself much to the great discomfort of both of us at that time. In the early days after the disclosure of the pregnancy I did in fact manage to once meet with [REDACTED] covertly and both of us decided that our relationship would continue and that we would get married and bring up the child. However, shortly after that meeting [REDACTED] 'disappeared' and despite many visits and letters to her home she was not in contact with me again. At that time I was understandably quite distraught as I was being kept totally in the dark as to the whereabouts of [REDACTED] and our unborn child. Sometime later my mother was contacted by someone (I don't know if it was by [REDACTED] parents or somebody from the Social Services) and advised that a decision had been reached that the child would be adopted and that 'they' felt it would be in the best interests of [REDACTED] myself and the respective families that no further contact be made on the matter. My mother (who for your guidance was widowed in [REDACTED]) voiced her protest along with myself against this 'decision' and asked for some further direct discussions to take place especially between [REDACTED] and myself together with the guidance and assistance of a social worker. Our pleas fell on deaf ears.

Thereafter my mother and I contacted St. Annes Adoption Society for advice [redacted] being at [redacted] I cannot be sure if in fact St. Annes handled the adoption [redacted] but I presume this was the case as the only piece of correspondence I have is from St. Annes, a copy of which I enclose herewith for your perusal. Logically, my prime concern at that time was to be given the opportunity to discuss the situation directly with [redacted] to ensure that the decision to adopt was her own and not a result of parental pressure, which I must admit I felt could be a factor in view of what we had discussed at the one meeting we managed to have earlier and of course taking into account the fact that she was only about [redacted] years of age. As you will see from the enclosed letter from Fr. [redacted] at St. Annes, he did contact [redacted] and advised her that I was anxious to contact her. Unfortunately, I personally did not hear from [redacted] or her parents again, although my mother was told by [redacted]'s parents that the child was a boy and that he had been handed up for adoption. I was never advised of the child's Christian name nor the day/month of birth but it was in 1978 and from memory I believe it should have been in [redacted].

Being powerless to do anything more I left for [redacted] to build a new life for myself and have been resident here ever since. Some time later I was told by a relative of mine that she eventually met with [redacted] who told her that the child was born in Co. Meath and was handed up for adoption at the age of about 1 week. Whilst I have no reason to question the accuracy of this information, my relative's recollection of her meeting with [redacted] is rather vague and in any case as this information was given to me "second hand", I cannot say for certain that it is absolutely correct. I would like to add that there might have been some further communication between [redacted] parents/the adoption society and my mother but if by chance there was any, I was not party to it. Unfortunately my mother died in [redacted] so I have no way of checking this further.

I fully appreciate that a lot of the details given above may be rather irrelevant to you and kindly excuse me for this but as you recommended that I should give you as much information as possible regarding my relationship with [redacted] and the birth that ensued, I have done so.

As to my own background, I will be [redacted] years old on [redacted] this year and I'm glad to say that I am now very contented in my life, enjoying a very happy and solid marriage with a beautiful [redacted] old baby boy and also a very fulfilling career as a [redacted] of a [redacted]

This letter is written to you with the full knowledge and consent of my wife and I would like to stress that I have no wish to interfere in the life of the child or the adoptive parents and my reason for writing is to request that my name and address be put on file at the adoption society or other relevant body in the case the child eventually wishes to find out who his natural father is. I have read of cases where some adopted children have a strong yearning to trace or contact their natural father and/or mother and I would just like to put it on record that both my wife and myself give our full consent for the child to be given

my details/address and to contact me should he wish to do so when he comes of age or at any time in the years ahead.

In the unfortunate event of the child having died, I would wish to be advised of course providing that you have access to such information. Forgive me if you feel that this is a strange request but it is something that comes up in my mind from time to time and I would rather know if possible.

It would be greatly appreciated if you could kindly acknowledge receipt of this letter and also if you feel that it is necessary or prudent for me to write a similar letter to any other relevant organisation in Ireland (bearing in mind that I'm not totally sure that St. Annes handled the adoption or whether you just assisted me at that time), I would be most obliged if could supply the names and addresses as I sincerely only want to make sure that no obstacles from my side are put in the way of the child should he wish to get access to my details or get in contact at a future time.

Many thanks indeed for your cooperation and understanding and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely

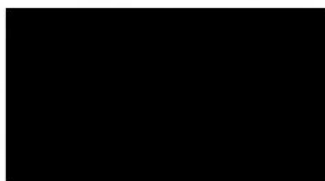




CORK & ROSS FAMILY CENTRE

Incorporating
ST. ANNES ADOPTION SOCIETY

34, Paul St., Cork. Tel. [REDACTED]



[REDACTED] 1992

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter which I received at the end of May. I apologise for the long delay in replying, but you will probably be aware that we have had a postal strike so we have had all our post delayed.

Further to your letter I have sent a copy to the Adoption Board who will leave your letter on file should your son ever wish to enquire about you, or trace you.

If you change address you may wish to update this so you can write here and/or to the Adoption Board, Hawkins House, Dublin 2.

Finally, in relation to your request re having information if something were to happen to your child, this is something we say to all parents, we cannot guarantee as we may not have access to this information ourselves. If we do by chance hear about a particular situation, we would record it on file, but this is very much a matter of chance.

I hope this information will be of some assistance.

Kindest regards.

Yours sincerely,



Senior Social Worker

ST. ANNES ADOPTION SOCIETY
34 PAUL STREET,
CORK

ATTENTION: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 1999.

I refer to my last letter to you dated [REDACTED] 1992 and your subsequent kind reply of the [REDACTED] 1992, a copy of which is enclosed herewith for your easy reference.

As requested in your last letter I wish to advise you that I have moved back to Ireland and my new address is as given above. As soon as I would be most obliged if you could place my address on file and also let the relevant person at the adoption board in Dublin know of same. For this purpose I enclose a stamped envelope.

Many thanks in advance for your kind assistance and for the sake of good order please confirm that my new address has been put on file, should my son ever wish to enquire about or trace me.

Yours sincerely,
[REDACTED]

CORK & ROSS FAMILY CENTRE
incorporating St. Anne's Adoption Society

Cork & Ross Family Centre, 34 Paul Street, Cork
Tel: [REDACTED] Fax: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 1999

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter of [REDACTED] 1999 with your up to date information for your son's file.

As [REDACTED] is no longer working with St. Anne's I'm afraid I'm unable to trace the file as you didn't give me your son's name or date of birth which is the only means we have of locating the file. If you would provide this information I would of course be happy to put your current address on the file.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Director

ST. ANNES ADOPTION SOCIETY
34 PAUL STREET
CORK.

Attention: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 1999.

Dear [REDACTED]

Many thanks for your letter dated [REDACTED] 1999. As previously explained to [REDACTED] I was never advised of my son's name nor of his date of birth. The only relevant information I could give was that my son was born in 1978 ([REDACTED]) and the mother's name was [REDACTED] who's address at that time was [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

In [REDACTED] 1978 I was in touch with Rev. [REDACTED] at St. Annes Adoption Society who advised me that he had traced [REDACTED] whereabouts which he said was "well away from Cork" and it would be up to her if she wished to contact me to discuss her intention to hand the baby up for adoption. [REDACTED] did not make any further contact with me however a relative of mine (since deceased) did tell me later that she met Rose and was advised that the baby was born in Co. Meath.

and handed it for adoption.

Obviously, my main concern here is that my new address/contact details are put on file with the appropriate authorities so that this information is readily available to my son should he at some stage wish to contact me as his natural father. Therefore I would be most obliged if you could confirm that you have been able to locate my or [REDACTED] [REDACTED] file and that my new contact details have been put on file at the Adoption Board and that my son will have access to same should he wish to do so.

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you very much for your cooperation and assistance.

Yours sincerely
[REDACTED]

CORK & ROSS FAMILY CENTRE
incorporating St. Anne's Adoption Society

Cork & Ross Family Centre, 34 Paul Street, Cork
Tel: [REDACTED] Fax: [REDACTED]



[REDACTED] 1999

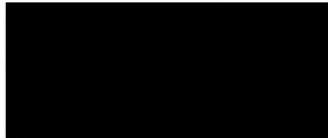
Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter of [REDACTED] 1999.

Based on the information you supplied I have located your son's file and have placed your current information on the file. I have also written to the Adoption Board in Dublin letting them know of your current whereabouts.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,



Director

A SERVICE OF THE DIOCESES OF CORK AND ROSS

Dear [REDACTED]

Words cannot express how delighted I am to have finally found you. For [REDACTED] years I have hoped and dreamt of meeting with you. I want you to know that I have always loved you and have always wanted to trace and meet with you.

For so many years all doors were closed to me due to the archaic laws in this country relating to matters of adoption. However, through persistence and great help from my family and from a voluntary group, consisting of adoptees and natural parents who offer support and assistance with tracing, I was eventually given the knowledge and power which enabled me to trace you for myself, without the assistance of any governmental agency or department. In fact I am a member of that group myself and I also assist adoptees and natural parents with their efforts to trace and reunite.

Just to give you a little background on myself, I come from a family of [REDACTED] boys and [REDACTED] girls and I am the [REDACTED]. My mother and father passed away in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] respectively. I am [REDACTED] and will be [REDACTED] years old on the [REDACTED] aged [REDACTED] and I am married with [REDACTED]. My wife and the boys know all about you and are equally as delighted that I have found you.

I enclose a few photographs, one when I was the same age as you are now and the other two are recent, from which you will notice that my main hobby is fly fishing (and eating!)

I am so much looking forward to receiving a letter back from you and ultimately to meeting with you. Having lost the last [redacted] years, for me our meeting cannot come soon enough. If you feel the same way I really would like us to meet up as soon as possible. Having said that, my priority is for you to feel as comfortable as possible and to take things at a pace that suits you. May be you could let me know your feelings on this in your return letter. I feel that the letters we exchange are a very private and personal thing between us and therefore I will be telling [redacted] to pass you my letter unopened.

[redacted] obviously both of us are nervous about our forthcoming meeting, but at the end of the day we are only "strangers" because of circumstances beyond both of our control.

My understanding is that you have advised your parents that I have initiated contact with you and I am so pleased that you have done that. Although I don't yet know your parents I have the utmost respect for them and I would appreciate it if you would be so kind as to pass on my best wishes to them.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely



XX.