

**PRO-CHOICE
PRO-CHILD**

Chain of Life

P.O. BOX 8081 ▲ BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA 94707

A Feminist Adoption Reform and Child Welfare Newsletter
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THE WITHDRAWAL/ACTING-OUT DICHOTOMY AS A WAY ADOPTEES RESPOND TO THE PRIMAL WOUND

© BY NANCY VERRIER, M.A.

In my research on adoption, it has become apparent to me that regardless of the situation into which a relinquished child is placed, that child is profoundly wounded as a result of separation from the first mother, a wound that I call the "primal wound." The severing of the bond, which begins in utero, makes it difficult for the child ever again to trust the permanence of the connection to his or her caregiver. This results in feelings toward the caregiver that are anxious, ambivalent, conflictual, and vacillating.

THE CHILD FEELS CHAOTIC INSIDE, SO HE CAUSES CHAOS OUTSIDE

These feelings appear to cause the child to assume one of two diametrically opposed attitudes toward the adoptive parent or caregiver: aggressive, provocative, and non-compliant (the acting-out child), or quiet, compliant, and acquiescent (the withdrawn or "perfect" child). When there are two adopted children in a family, in every case that I have studied, one adoptee assumes the acting-out role and the other is compliant, regardless of their birth order, gender, or personality.

The children most often seen in treatment, of course, are those who act out, because the parents are puzzled about their behavior and are uncertain as to what to do about it. Adoptees make up a high percentage (30%-40%)¹ of those children found in juve-

nile halls, residential treatment centers, and special schools. This must be seen as a cry for help from deeply wounded children and not a result of genetics or inadequate parenting.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN "GOOD ADJUSTMENT" AND "NUMBING OUT."

Adoptive parents need help in understanding what is going on. The constant confrontation, especially between mother and child, triggers the mother's own feelings of rejection, to which she often reacts inappropriately, which only reinforces the child's feelings that no one understands him. This raises the child's anxiety level so that he acts out even more, and the process becomes cyclical and more and more destructive to the parent-child relationship.

When these children are seen in treatment, it is a rare clinician who understands that the child is suffering from the loss of the first mother and that the child's behavior is a way of communicating the pain of that separation and loss: The child feels chaotic inside, so she causes chaos outside; she had no control over what happened to her, so she desperately needs to be in control of every situation; she feels manipulated, so she manipulates; she is living a lie, so she lies; she feels stolen (which is more comforting than to feel as if she had been given away), so she steals.

continued on next page. . .

¹This observation was made in 1985 by Parenting Resources, now located in Tustin, California, and has proven to be true by my own observations, including discussions with people working in juvenile treatment centers.



. . .continued from previous page

These behaviors, if seen as metaphors for the past experience of the child, can be important clues to the child's true feelings, which can then be acknowledged and validated. Behavior is a form of communication, and the acting-out child is trying to communicate the pain of abandonment and loss, behavior that reflects memories of past experiences. The adoptee has a right to his feelings, but must learn that there are consequences to the ways in which they are acted out.

If the adoptee can be taught less destructive responses to those feelings, some real healing might be accomplished (and fewer children might end up in custody).

But what about the quiet ones, the "perfect" children, whose parents will say, "Well, I don't know why you are having so much trouble with Johnny, Billy never causes us any problem at all." What these parents don't realize is that their quiet child is probably operating from a false self, an exaggerated persona, which helps protect him from further rejection or abandonment.

This tendency toward a false self is important to recognize as a defense or coping mechanism, and deserves scrutiny by parents and professionals because it is often seen as "good adjustment." The acquiescent child is very deceptive. Because he doesn't cause much trouble, he often seems untroubled. One must not be lulled into believing that this child suffers no pain. Although he often seems affectionate, it might be important to notice how willing he is to express other feelings, such as anger, sadness, hostility, and disappointment to ascertain how real the feelings of affection actually are. Are they truly feelings of a deep, secure love, or are they an anxious response to the fear of a further abandonment?

Parents often mistake clinginess for affection, and a lack of "negative" feelings as a sign of good adjustment. Yet adjustment often means shutting down. The "good adoptee" is often a "people pleaser," constantly seeking approval. She is probably polite, cooperative, charming, and generally "good," but locked inside her is pain and an inability to truly bond with anyone because she is not being herself. A truly well-adjusted child can allow herself to experience a whole range of feelings.

It is important to distinguish between "good adjustment" and "numbing out." Parents need to become aware of opportunities for the expression of the more "negative" feelings and to give permission for them to be expressed. This may open these children up to a greater range of feelings and more access to the true Self.

Separation from the original mother is perhaps the worst trauma a child can suffer. Some children respond to this trauma by acting out in an aggressive, provoc-

ative manner and others respond by "numbing out" and becoming compliant, malleable, and "perfect." Both are wounded, but each is responding in a different way. Each has the same wish for love and acceptance, and each has the same fears of rejection and abandonment. One pushes for the inevitable and the other guards against it. In neither case is the person acting from his or her true Self, but from a false self, which helps protect the adoptee from further hurt, rejection, and disappointment. It is up to parents and clinicians to identify the particular mode in which the adoptee is reacting to the pain, to validate that pain, and to help him or her find appropriate ways of responding to it.

IT IS NO LONGER NECESSARY TO SUFFER ALONE AND IN SILENCE.

Adult adoptees can ask themselves if these attitudes and responses are any longer serving a purpose, or if they are hampering their ability to experience trusting, intimate relationships. If the feelings seem out of proportion to the present situation, then the person is probably responding to old feelings, which have been triggered once again. In this case, they should seek help from someone who understands the lifelong impact of early separation and loss on adult relationships. It is no longer necessary to suffer alone and in silence. More and more people are beginning to understand the various manifestations of the primal wound and to facilitate the healing process. ▲

Nancy Verrier, M.A., is an adoptive mother and psychotherapist who works with members of the adoption triad in private practice. In addition to her clinical work and research, she lectures and writes and is currently working on a book entitled *The Primal Wound: Legacy of the Adopted Child*. Inquiries and comments can be sent to Ms. Verrier at 919 Village Center, Lafayette, CA 94549, or phone (510) 284-5813.

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Adoption on TV - Truth Weirder Than Fiction

by Janine Baer

I confess: I watch non-educational television shows. And it seems that almost every sitcom or drama (not to mention the talk shows) eventually has an adoption story.

In 1991, some of the fictitious stories were more accurate than, say, certain true stories broadcast on certain sensationalized talk shows. You may have been fortunate to have missed the real-life Geraldo and Raphael shows that included Why I Wish I'd Never Searched stories, one by a male adoptee who was seduced by his birth mother. Sad, but hardly typical.

Following are examples of two 1991 fictitious shows which, if you can overlook (or enjoy) the glitter, costumes, and didacticism, conveyed some emotional truths about adoption.

Golden Girls

On an episode of the comedy "Golden Girls," a program about four older women living as roommates, dingbat character Rose (played by Betty White) was revealed to be an adoptee – more bad PR for adoptees. (First we learn we are prevalent among mass murderers and turn up in psycho wards out of all proportion, and now this.) The rest of the show was funny and – good news – actually dealt with the real issue of adoptees' anger at abandonment by birth parents.

it doesn't matter how old an adoptee is when she has a reunion

Rose's birth father was portrayed as an elderly monk, long brown robe and all (ah, Hollywood), who enters the hospital as a patient where Rose is working as a volunteer. As the story unfolds, the monk had had an affair in his youth with the cook at the monastery. The cook – Rose's birth mother – had died in childbirth. Rose asks her birth father angrily why he never came to look for her; he says he didn't want to interfere with her life with her adoptive parents.

Because the "golden girls" are older women, this episode showed that it doesn't matter how old an adoptee is when she has a reunion, she carries feelings and questions about her adoption throughout her life. However belatedly, Rose had an opportunity that not all adoptees share: that of confronting her birth parent in person with those feelings and questions, as opposed to confronting an empty chair in a therapist's

office. I wondered who on the staff of Golden Girls was a triad member, or close to one – someone had done her homework.



Beverly Hills 90210

At the other end of the generational spectrum, "Beverly Hills 90210," a show about contemporary high school students, mentioned the adoptive status of 17-year-old Steve in several episodes, culminating with the pre-Christmas show during which Steve searches for his birth mother.

In an episode earlier in '91, Steve, usually a mildly obnoxious but good-looking member of the 90210 gang, was revealed to be an adoptee. He became upset during prom night because it was his birthday and he wondered about his birth parents. As can happen when the real object of one's anger is inaccessible or unknown (can a teenager conceptualize "the system of secret adoptions" as his enemy?), Steve took out some of his anger on his longtime friend Kelly. (Later, on the Halloween episode, Steve improved in my estimation when, dressed as Zorro, he slugged the guy who tried to date-rape Kelly.)

On the December 12th episode, the entire hour revolved around adoption. Charley, a creepy high school kid who had rivaled Steve for his mother's attention since their early childhood (Mom was a TV actress and the creep played her TV son) taunts Steve, not only by dating Kelly but by saying unsympathetically that "everyone knows adoptees are insecure." This comment earns Charley a black eye. It turns out that Charley knew that Steve was adopted long before Steve knew it himself. Out of fear of losing his affection, Mrs. Sanders had waited until Steve was sixteen to tell him.

When Steve finds out that everyone but he had known he was adopted, he is furious, and develops a burning desire to search for his birth mother. In only-on-TV fashion, Steve's mother tells him his birth mother's name and the town she was from in New Mexico. Telling his adoptive mother he isn't doing this to hurt her but to find out who he is, Steve hops on a bus headed for New Mexico *that night*. No support group, no search consultant, nothing; he just goes.

But wait; I'm wrong. His gang of friends at West Beverly High is his support group. They all take him to the bus station (he has a new car, but that would be ostentatious) and tearfully say they will be there for him when he returns; that they are his family.

I sensed after that episode that Steve, who kept referring to his birth mother as his "real mother," would decide who his "real" mother has been all along. (I was right.)

Steve's adoptive mother redeemed herself in Part I
continued on page 8 . . .

BOOKS BY MAIL

A QUESTION OF ADOPTION: CLOSED STRANGER ADOPTION IN NEW ZEALAND, 1944-1974 BY ANNE ELSE
 Explores the rationale for and practices of secret, stranger adoption, which are past history in New Zealand. Includes a chapter about the native Maoris. 239 pages. 1991. 5 copies in stock as of 12/91. **\$17.50**

SACRED BOND: THE LEGACY OF BABY M BY PHYLLIS CHESLER
 About women, "surrogacy," and adoption - possibly the best feminist discussion published in the U.S. 1988, 212 pages. 10 copies in stock. **\$7.95**

WOMAN-DEFINED MOTHERHOOD EDITED BY JANE PRICE KNOWLES & ELLEN COLE
 Anthology exploring motherhood from a feminist perspective, primarily by women psychologists. 1990, 243 pages. 2 copies in stock. **\$14.95**
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MOTHERS ON TRIAL: THE BATTLE FOR CHILDREN AND CUSTODY BY PHYLLIS CHESLER
 Victimization of mothers that can lead to loss of child custody. Also the international custody situation and children's rights. 1986, 558 pages. 2 copies in stock. **\$11.95**
 Also one copy that is slightly used, **\$7.** plus postage

CHOICES EDITED BY TRINA ROBBINS
 48 pages of comics about the problems that result when abortion access is abridged. 1990. 3 copies in stock. **\$4.00**

DIFFERENT MOTHERS EDITED BY LOUISE RAFKIN
 What does it feel like to be raised by a lesbian mother? Interviews of "children" (ages 5 through 40) of lesbian mothers. 1990, 174 pages. 2 copies in stock. **\$9.95**

CONSIDERING PARENTHOOD BY CHERI PIES
 Adoption, legal guardianship, foster parenting, alternative fertilization; even "sexual intercourse with a man" are considered for prospective lesbian parents. 1988, 274 pages. 2 copies in stock. **\$9.50**

RUBYFRUIT JUNGLE BY RITA MAE BROWN
 1973 coming out novel has lesbian adoptee as main character; the author is an adoptee. 246 pages. 2 copies in stock. **\$4.95**

FAMILIES BY MICHAEL WILLHOITE
 A coloring book for young children about different kinds of families, those with two moms or two dads, and adoptive, divorced, and stepfamilies. 1991, 32 pages. 2 copies in stock. **\$2.95**

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*Little Daughter
 Lost to me
 in the mists
 Beauty beneath
 the stars.
 Grow like the
 weed seed
 Cast to the wind
 Strong, determined
 Similar yet unique
 Be a daughter of mine.
 Valery Guignon*



Newscaster Televises Her Reunion

San Francisco Bay area TV viewers who saw Channel 4 news on Halloween got a treat in the reunion story of newscaster Ysabel Duron and her twenty-two year old son, Paul. The report switched among interviews of Ysabel, Paul, and Paul's adoptive mother Laurel, describing their feelings about the reunion.

One unusual facet of this story was that the searcher was the adoptive mother. Laurel, who lives in Washington state, knew Ysabel's name as her son's birth mother. Laurel contacted Ysabel, and received a response. She gave Ysabel's letter to Paul for a birthday gift, the "best and hardest" birthday gift she could give him, in the adoptive mother's words.

As Paul explained, this was almost too much for him to handle on his birthday; he cried; he was in shock. Ysabel had given him her phone number, and he called almost immediately.

It was decided that Ysabel would fly to Seattle the next weekend for a reunion. She asked a friend in Seattle to arrange to have a cameraperson film the meeting at the airport. Part one of the report ends as Ysabel and Paul have a heartfelt hello hug at the airport.

The three participants were open to sharing their true feelings for the camera. Laurel had initially decided to contact Ysabel when Laurel's adopted daughter relinquished a child, and Laurel saw how much pain her daughter went through in that process.

Ysabel had signed the adoption papers "without a lot of emotion."

A coincidence was that Paul was in the army and had been stationed at Fort Ord, California during the Desert Storm war during the *same time* that his birth mother had been covering the story there for KRON-TV. Paul's grand parents live 15 minutes away from Fort Ord, but of course Paul had not known this at the time he was there. In their correspondence, Ysabel sent Paul videotapes of herself covering a story at the military base.

When they met, Paul asked his birth mother if she had thought about looking for him. She said no; she had felt she didn't have the right. In fact, she now thinks, she had deadened her feelings about his birth, having signed the adoption papers "without a lot of emotion." She wasn't going to let it matter. But after meeting Paul, Ysabel had to face the fact that it mattered a lot. The reunion, she said, was like peeling away the layers of an onion, revealing pain, loss, sadness. In that process, she became afraid Paul could "walk away a second time," which is somewhat the reverse of what

happens in a relinquishment, but the abandonment is often felt by both sides.

Paul also had not planned to look for Ysabel. He felt she had relinquished him and probably had another family to raise. Paul said about his decision not to search, "I thought I was tough and could handle anything. . ." After they met, Paul had the same feelings of insecurity that Ysabel did. He wanted to make sure she really wanted him in her life.

Meanwhile Laurel, who had started this whole process, felt terribly threatened, while at the same time knowing she did the right thing. In fact, she said it was "the rightest thing I ever did," although for four days during the reunion she questioned what she had done. When Ysabel finally flew home, Laurel felt less threatened, but she still felt that her relationship to Paul had been permanently changed as a result of his new relationship with his birth mother.

After watching this show, I naturally compared it to my own reunions and to the reunions – or non-reunions – of many other families separated by adoption. This is how things *could be* for all of us. A successful reunion may not require the support of the adoptive parents, but their understanding certainly helps. In this case, the reunion would not have happened without it.

The politics of sealed records and the mechanics of finding a birth parent or child are a concrete and pervasive set of difficulties in adoption reunions. But opening our hearts to the needs of others and our own needs is another kind of challenge. The three people in this story show us how far we have come as a society. The personal stories I hear of reluctant, rejecting, or frightened adoptees, birth parents, or adoptive parents show that we have a long way to go.

Paul and Ysabel made an appearance in person in the studio one evening during the showing of this segment. They said their next step will be to find Paul's birth father. ▲

▲ CHAIN LETTERS ▲

November 1, 1991

Please send me a sample copy of your newsletter "Chain of Life." I am a lesbian adoptee who recently met my mother. We are both very interested in your newsletter and think it is wonderful that you've come up with this idea.

Thanks,
Name Withheld on Request ▲

P.S. Saw your ad in Lesbian Connection!

continued on next page. . .

December 5, 1991

Dear Janine:

Sorry I haven't written to you this fall. Many thanks for publishing my work - it has meant a great deal to me. As I vowed, I will not let Peter's flame go out. I've just been awarded a doctoral fellowship in psychology at Boston College, and plan to delve into the needs and issues of interracial adoptees, especially Asian, and their (our) families. I credit you and all the other adoptees I've known for blazing trails and inspiring me to undertake this research. It's been a harrowing, incredible year, and this is a fitting way to rise from the ashes. Now the real work begins! . . .

Yours,

Siu Wai Anderson ▲

To Friends of PACT

(Pre and Post Adoption Consulting Team):

The PACT team has decided this holiday season to adopt a family. In our philosophy, family preservation comes first and foremost, and only after all efforts are made should a family consider adoption possibilities. We believe that this kind of honesty and care can lead to better adoptive families with more openness and more opportunity for healthy development of that whole family. With this in mind, we are aware this holiday season, more than in the past, of the number of young mothers and children who are homeless.

We have gone to a shelter in Somerville where the PACT team resides and have found a very young mother with an 18-month old and a newborn. She has been in the shelter for a short time and it is her hope and intention to keep her family together.

We would like to support her in any way that we can. We will ask that you send a check . . . or that you send clothing or gifts, new or used and in good shape for this young family. The PACT team will be providing advocacy, possibly day care, clothing, gifts, etc., to work to keep this family intact. This is just one family, but if we make this effort with one family this year and another next, and if we send out the word that adoption can be a wonderful and creative way to build a family, but it works best when it is the informed decision of the birth parents after counseling and efforts for family preservation have been made.

Please join us in this model program and help us in adopting this family.

Sincerely,

Joyce Maguire Pavao, Ed.D., LCSW
Program Director and Founder of
PACT at The Family Center
385 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02144
(617) 628-8815 ▲

Feedback Received Recently from Readers

(from forms sent with renewal notices)

I would like to see Chain of Life include more...

- support for birthmothers uninterested in motherhood
 - addressing issues of Lesbians considering parenthood and adoptions in that context
 - data regarding the effects of adoption on development/growth/psychological well-being of adoptees
 - of the same! It just gets better and better.
- Visually attractive, very good articles, poetry, artwork.

and less. . .

- insistence that adoption itself (as opposed to secretiveness) always is painful
- international focus

I have liked. . .

- articles on the wrongs of international adoption
- the articles very much - really well done
- the poems and the cartoons - great additions!
- lesbian positive & supported stories; perspective on intercountry adoption
- almost everything, especially Mi Ok Bruining's work

and disliked . . .

- no complaints
- people who want to hear positive things about adoption. For a birthmother who has been rejected [by her adult child], there are no positives.

Other comments:

- I'd like to hear coming out stories from adoptees and birth mothers/fathers (I know that can be tough if they don't write!). I also like the Chain of Life books and resources - the growth of the newsletter has not impacted its quality! Thanks and keep up the good work!
- Wow! Can't believe you address all my adoption issues as I am working with a mainstream agency seeking a Latin American baby. Good work!
- Thank you for putting it together!
- I love your newsletter - even when I don't agree with all viewpoints expressed. I especially like the excellent poetry and articles about and by foreign adoptees.
- Keep up the good work.

▲ RESOURCES ▲

▲ Journalist Susan Manuel would like to hear from **adults who were adopted internationally** to learn about their experiences and views for a documentary film she is making. She is now especially looking for trans-national adoptees raised in Canada, and male adoptees. Her film project, "The Baby Trade," was described in the previous issue of *Chain of Life*. For further information and to find out more precisely what Susan is looking for, write to: *Susan Manuel, 1315 S. Maple St. #305, Ann Arbor, MI 48103, or phone (313) 769-1197.*

▲ **Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG)** in conjunction with Lambda Rising Bookstore sells books to help people accept their gay and lesbian children or spouses; books for lesbian and gay children and adolescents; books about being gay; and books about caring for people with HIV disease. Ask for their list of recommended reading from *LRCS, 1625 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20009-1013, or call Lambda Rising at 1-800-621-6969.*

▲ Tamar Gershon, MD, and Larry Petko, MD are pleased to announce their special interest in **pediatric care for the children of lesbian and gay parents**. Their goal is to provide top quality pediatric services in a gay and lesbian sensitive environment. Their clinical practice is located at the University of California San Francisco in the Department of Pediatrics. Initially they will be seeing patients on Wednesday afternoons with urgent care, and telephone advice available on a 24-hour basis. You can phone them with any questions:

Tamar Gershon: 415 476-4883

Larry Petko: 415 476-6453

▲ **Children's Voice** is a new publication of the Child Welfare League of America. Articles in the first 32-page issue include "Family Foster Care," "Voices for Children: Senator Bentsen and Representative Downey," and "Child Welfare in Canada and the U.S." Subscription rates for individuals are \$35 a year (4 issues), and are available from *Child Welfare League of America, 440 First Street NW, Suite 310, Washington, DC 20001-2085.*

▲ Another excellent newsletter is **Adoption Circles**, Canada's adoption reform quarterly. It is eight pages long and represents the organization **Missing Pieces Through Adoption**, which has four chapters in British Columbia. Articles in the Fall 1991 issue cover pre-election promises about opening adoption records in B.C. and an open letter from a Catholic birth mother to

her priest about the pain of having given up her child for adoption.

When a birth mother asked representatives of the several political parties about their positions on open adoption records, most candidates knew what she was talking about and actually could explain their party's position. The progressive New Democrat Party said their party is in support of open records. Here in the San Francisco Bay Area, a liberal Democrat (Tom Bates) has been against open records, while a Republican (Charles Quackenbush) sponsored California's open records legislation last year, a situation that I personally found politically disorienting.

To get **Adoption Circles** in the U.S., send \$15 to \$30 on a sliding scale (U.S. dollars), to: *Adoption Circles, Suite 102 - 2045 Franklin Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, CANADA V5L 1R4.*

▲ It would be easy to spend all day just reading adoption and child welfare newsletters, and I know you can't subscribe to everything, but here's another resource: **WARM, the Washington Adoption Rights Movement**, which publishes **Mediator**. *WARM, 5950 - 6th Avenue South, Suite 107, Seattle, WA 98108-3317.*

▲ **Feminist Teacher Magazine** provides support for feminist teachers at all grade levels, from preschool to graduate school. It is committed to publishing articles that challenge traditional teaching practices and research methodologies. Published three times a year, the cost is \$12 for individuals in the U.S. Write: *Feminist Teacher, Ballantine 442, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47405.*

▲ **The National Association for Family Based Services** believes that the family is the best environment for the growth and development of children. Therefore, their services focus on the entire family with the goal of empowering it. For more information about its family preservation work or its conferences, write: *P.O. Box 005, Riverdale, IL 60627, or phone 319/396-4829.*

"Statistics indicate a much lower rate of attrition and turnover among social workers doing family preservation services. Apparently they derive satisfaction, see success, feel great about what they're doing. Keeping families together just has to be more satisfying than breaking up families."

— Congressional Representative Tom Downey, in "Children's Voice," Fall 1991, from an article about federal child welfare legislation he co-sponsored.

... TV shows, continued from page 3

by apologizing for making Steve get along with Charley all those years, when Charley had been such a "bastard" to him. Mom even cancelled the show she was going to produce with Charley as a way of showing her support for Steve.

During that episode, Steve got in a few good adoptee comments about feeling like an "ornament" in his mother's life; in a dream sequence, reference is made to adoptees feeling as if they were bought in a store. Beverly Hills is a good setting in which to highlight the domestic-baby-trade aspect of adoption, and to point out there are some things money can't buy – among them feeling understood and supported, and learning one's roots.

There was also the predictable pep talk, from teenager Dylan, that "real" parents are the ones who raise you and take care of you, not necessarily the parents who give birth to you. Dylan had been neglected and/or abandoned by his (only) mother and father, and speaks from that experience. I think this Message is for the general audience and is something that most adoptees already know: Steve is not looking for his "real" mother in that sense, nor is he looking because he is dissatisfied with his adoptive mother; he is mostly looking for his real self. As often happens with real life adoptee reunions, Steve is better able to appreciate and relate to his adoptive mother after attaining some closure on his search.

If any Chain of Life readers want to let the rest of us know about television shows or films you have seen, consider sending in a review for future publication. The mass media powerfully influence our society on this and other topics. ▲

American Adoption Congress to Hold Conference in March in Philadelphia

With the theme "Proclaiming Liberty in Adoption," the 14th International conference for triad members and professionals will take place March 19 through 22, 1992 at the Sheraton Society Hill Hotel in Philadelphia.

The speaker at the general session will be Pauline Ley from Victoria, Australia, who will speak on "Adoption law in Australia – from Darkness to Light." Fifty-four workshops are listed in the brochure. (Nine meet in each time slot.) Just a few of those are: "Children who lose a sibling to adoption," "Including Adoptive Parents in the Search," "Post-traumatic Stress Disorder in Later Placed Children," and "Can Advertising for Birthmothers Be Condoned?" In the last set of workshops, one is titled "Gay and Lesbian Concerns in Adoption," led by an adoptive mother.

Before February 18, registration fees are \$160. for A.A.C. members; after that date the cost goes up to \$185. Add \$45. for non-members. Membership is on a sliding scale starting at \$25. Hotel rates are \$108. per night for single or double rooms, but these must be made by February 18. Phone the hotel at (215) 238-6000 and say you are a conference participant.

For more information and your own brochure, phone the AAC Conference Department at (714) 434-7635 (Southern California), or write to American Adoption Congress, 1000 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 9, Washington, DC 20036. ▲



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I am an adoptee, a birth parent, an adoptive parent,

an adoption professional _____, someone else _____