

Submission
No 1

INQUIRY INTO SPENT CONVICTIONS FOR JUVENILE OFFENDERS

Name: Name Suppressed
Date received: 3/12/2009

Partially Confidential

Re: Inquiry to be held into juvenile sex offenders:

My name is [omitted at request of the author] and I have been married to [omitted] for almost 40 years. My husband and I grew up in the same street and were friends from early childhood, attending local neighbourhood events such as bonfire nights etc.

In or around 1966 we started seeing more and more of each other, I was an only child and my husband was one of 6 children. My parents did not agree to my seeing [omitted] and thus we often had to meet in secret.

In March 1968 to my horror I discovered I was pregnant, only being 15 at the time, [omitted] was only 16. I managed to hide this fact from everyone until about 1 month before I gave birth and I was taken from school and sent to Sydney to a home called Lady Wakehurst. Whilst I was awaiting the birth of my child I completed my School Certificate.

After I gave birth to a baby girl in November 1968 my parents charged [omitted] with Carnal Knowledge. He was charged formally with this offence and given a bond. I was simply told to sign a paper after I had given birth (which I presume was for adoption) and as I was very frightened and confused I did not and was not brave enough to ask any questions as I knew I was in big trouble with my parents. My mother flew to Sydney and picked me up and we returned to [omitted] about one week after giving birth and the whole matter was never discussed again, but only came up when my mother told me how ashamed she was that I had a baby without being married but that I shouldn't discuss it with anyone as they were trying to keep it a secret. I never had the chance to see the baby or hold her and I am quite sure that I was anaesthetised for the birth as I have no memory of the birth at all.

However upon my return from Sydney I began a course at the local TAFE. [omitted] and I still were very much in love and eventually I became pregnant again. My parents gave their permission for us to marry and I was told to "get out". We were married on 23 February 1970 with only [omitted] mother and grandmother present and we moved to [omitted] immediately after the ceremony, [omitted] having cashed in an insurance policy to enable us to pay a bond on a flat. We moved back to [omitted] in or around June 1970 just before I gave birth to my son.

After I gave birth to my son my parents eventually came and around and we had a good relationship with them after that. We had another daughter in 1974.

We have been married now for almost 40 years (in Feb 2010) and both of our children are now Police Officers.

We have recently had contact with our adopted daughter who lives in Sydney and we spent her 41st birthday with her on the weekend of 13 Nov 2009. She has now grown up and can accept the situation we were put in all that time ago and the fact that we had no control over the decision to adopt her. [omitted] has never been charged with another offence but our problem is that when he submits an application for employment his name comes up red-flagged and it looks like he is a paedophile which of course he is not.

My father passed away in 1985 before we were aware of the consequences of what this would eventually mean to [*omitted*] employment prospects and the stigma of having a criminal offence recorded against his name. My mother has Alzheimer's disease and she lived with us for over 12 months until such time she became unaware of where she was and was waking up every night and saying she was "lost". I recently arranged for her to go into full time care as I was having trouble managing with working full-time and I now visit her each week.

We would be happy to attend the hearing on this matter to put our case forward as we are sure that there would be many other couples who are also in a similar situation and it certainly seems unfair that some parents laid charges against boy while other parents didn't bother. Thus meaning some couples are continuing to pay for something that happened a long time ago and some couples have had no repercussions at all.

Thank you for taking the time to read this submission.

Yours faithfully