

Infants do not have to die in garbage cans!

By Steven M. Kirsh*

Women who are pregnant do not have to abort their babies because they are unable to care for them. Infertile couples do not have to go through their lives without the loving touches of a child. Adoption provides a wonderful alternative. The problem in this country today is that adoption is still so misunderstood. The general public does not get it, in large part because of the media's obsession with glamorizing the negative aspects of adoption. Only when an adoptee commits a horrendous act is the person's way of entering his family mentioned in the headlines. For example, headlines never read "Biological Child Murders Parents." On the other hand, if an adoptee commits the crime, most assuredly, the headlines would read "Adoptee Murders Parents." All of the made-for-tv movies portray adoption as birth parents being the victims of the process trying to regain custody of their children. Through the hallways of schools and among the public, in general, birth parents are looked upon as people who abandon their children, who do not care about them, and who want to rid themselves of the responsibility. No wonder there are so few babies available for adoption. In fact, in our country, 1.5 million abortions occur annually, whereas only 25,000 babies are available for adoption during the same time period. How is it possible that so many more women could choose to abort their babies than to make adoption plans.

The answer, I believe, is rather simple. Adoption is portrayed as such a negative experience that only those who are willing to investigate and research the subject realize what a truly remarkable and amazing process it is.

Birth parents are not heartless people who care nothing for their children. Quite the contrary, birth parents, who make adoption plans, should be viewed in our society as heroes. They are making the ultimate sacrifice. They are parting with their own flesh and blood because they want their children to have more in life than they, themselves, can offer. They love their children. They want their children to have the life and opportunities about which they can only dream. Love has everything to do with it. A birth parent makes an adoption plan because they dearly love their children.

Prospective adoptive parents go through a very difficult process in trying to adopt a newborn, including home studies, evaluations, psychological counseling, and a general intrusion into their lives. Why do they do this? The answer is clear. They want more than anything to be parents. Often times after spending thousands of dollars with medical specialists trying to

* Steven M. Kirsh and Joel D. Kirsh are attorneys who practice exclusively in the area of private adoption. They practice together as Kirsh & Kirsh, P. C., throughout the State of Indiana, and as counsel in adoptions between the states. Steven was graduated from Dartmouth College, *magna cum laude*, with high distinction in history, and from the Indiana University School of Law with honors. He served as President of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys in 1992-1993. In May, 1993, he participated in the negotiation of The Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption as part of the official United States delegation. Steven has also testified before the Indiana General Assembly on proposed changes to the Indiana adoption laws. Steven and Joel are frequent lecturers and spokespersons about adoption issues. Inquiries about adoption and further information or suggestions for additional topics to be included in "Adoption Briefs" should be directed to Steven or Joel at 2930 E. 96th Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46240 or skirsh@kirsh.com. Comments are welcome in writing or to (317) 575-5555 or fax (317) 575-5631. See also www.kirsh.com.

achieve a pregnancy, they are left with the alternative of not having a child at all or pursuing adoption. By the time that a couple is ready to adopt, they see the child they adopt as their “own” child, not second best to a child to whom they could not give birth. I cannot tell you how many times I have heard clients of mine tell me that it is hard to imagine how they could love a child any more than the one who they adopted. In fact, one client who adopted and then gave birth to a second child confided in me during the pregnancy that they were concerned that they might not love the child whom they were carrying as much as the one they adopted.

Adopted persons are not ax murders, the way they are portrayed in the press. They are normal individuals with the same hopes and dreams as everyone else. Certainly, some of them are bad people, but, likewise, some of them also achieve greatness. Unfortunately, the media would prefer to focus on the bad ones rather than the good ones. Why is it that not many people know that President Gerald Ford was adopted or that Olympic champion Gregg Luganis was adopted? I bet if either of them committed murder, we would read all about “Adoptee Gerald Ford” or “Adoptee Gregg Luganis”.

The only way that adoption and the members of the adoption triad -- the birth parents, the adoptive parents, and the children -- will receive the respect which they deserve, will be if the media takes an interest in conveying the facts about adoption rather than sensationalizing the negative aspects.