

BLACK MARKET ADOPTIONS

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BOLD



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

September 19, 1974

SUBJECT: Black Market Adoptions

TO: REPUBLICAN HOUSE MEMBERS

FROM: Eugene *EMF* Fulmer  
Director of Research

The enclosed is self explanatory. However, you should know that a letter identical to the one enclosed from Speaker Lee to Sister Consuelo was sent to:

American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania  
District Attorneys of Pennsylvania  
Public and Voluntary Child Welfare Agencies

You may wish to make your own contacts to learn if anyone has personal knowledge of the alleged practice of selling babies.

If you have any information, please write Mr. Gallen.

If you have any questions, contact us.

EMF:lmI

Encl.

KENNETH B. LEE  
THE SPEAKER



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ROOM 139 MAIN CAPITOL  
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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

September 17, 1974

Sister Consuelo, Regional Supervisor  
Catholic Charities of Greensburg Diocese  
125 N. McKean Street  
Kittanning, Pennsylvania

Dear Sister Consuelo:

As a result of a WCAU-TV News Series, "This Little Baby Went to Market," calling attention to the practice of selling babies through a Black Market for Babies in Pennsylvania, the House of Representatives has established a special committee to publicly inquire as to the possibility that children are being sold and, if true, to develop remedial legislation.

In its preliminary research work, the Committee has collected statements from various sources. Some of these are enclosed.

A copy of the resolution creating the Committee is also enclosed.

We are asking your whole-hearted support and cooperation in determining if a black market or gray market for babies does exist in Pennsylvania. If it does, we will need the same enthusiasm to bring the perpetrators to justice and to enact legislation which will eliminate the evil practice.

If you have any information and/or if you wish to cooperate with the Committee, please write to the Chairman:

Hon. James J. Gallen  
P.O. Box 37  
Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Thanks.

Sincerely,

KENNETH B. LEE

KBL:lm1

Encl.

## "WHAT 'THEY' SAY ABOUT ADOPTIONS"

### "The Adoption Dilema: The Divergence of Theory and Practice"

Brooklyn Law Review, Volume 38, July 1972

"Black Market babies may involve the business of actively recruiting women who will agree to give up their newborn."

"The attorney will offer the mother free hospital care during delivery, a home for her baby, and a considerable sum of money as an inducement."

"This practice could encourage those desperately in need of money to conceive in order to bear a child to offer in exchange for a prearranged remuneration."

### "Adoption Costs Soar as Births Decline"

Judy Klemesrud, New York Times, Feb. 20, 1973

"There is no law about legal fees--we can charge any fee that we want to,"  
Walter Lebowitz, Miami lawyer.

"If the baby has any defects, or is a mongolois, you will get the next baby available," Emmanuel H. Pravsmer, New York City lawyer.

"It's gotten to the point where babies that are supposed to go to my clients are being snatched right out from under our noses," Joseph Spencer, New York City lawyer.

"We just didn't want to go through the humiliation that applying at an agency involves," a Queens mother.

"A lady sold her baby for a car. Now that's clearly Black Market." Walter Lebowitz, a Miami lawyer.

"An East Side couple, who were considered 'too old' to adopt, were contacted by a lawyer who said he would mail them photographs of single young men and women, and for \$10,000, they could choose the couple to make the baby."

### "Why a Sudden Drop in Baby Adoptions"

U.S. News and World Report, July 30, 1973

"Black Market adoption is illegal in all States because it means purchasing the baby from its mother and forging the names of the new parents on a birth certificate."



## "Babies for Sale"

Robert S. Anson & Judith Clifford, New Times;  
June 14, 1974

"Recently a couple adopted two children for \$50,000, a flat \$ 25,000 a head."

"For a fee of \$5,000, a man said he would arrange to have a pregnant prostitute check into a maternity hospital under the wife's name."

"Stanley Michelman, a Manhattan lawyer, 'specializes' in German and Austrian girls."

"One lawyer boasted to prospective clients that he kept a stable of girls in Puerto Rico continually pregnant, supplying a steady stream of babies at \$ 15,000 a piece."

"A child who goes for \$ 8,000 these days, is described by one lawyer in the trade as A STEAL."

"Another attorney charges \$ 3,500 for the telephone number of an out-of-state lawyer, who may be able to arrange an adoption."

## "This Little Baby Went to Market"

WCAU-TV Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

"Because of legalized abortions, and the pill, babies who need a home are now fetching top dollar." Jim Walker, May 20/74

"They are a victim of supply and demand." Jim Walker, May 20/74

"Eileen Skolnich and her husband wanted to adopt a baby. A Philadelphia lawyer told them it would cost \$ 5,000."

"All I could picture was that my friend was going to get this baby because she had a thousand dollars more than I did." Eileen Skolnich, May 20/74

"I've seen this type of man operate before, and after the child is born, he's going to find this excuse and that excuse to raise the price." Sharon Horner, May 20/74

"A man like that is just simply damnable." Alvin Ackerman, May 21/74

"The real question at issue is, who is providing safeguards for these week old infants that are being moved inter-state." John Farrell, May 21/74

"These infants could be sold into slavery, sold to some sadist cult, whatever... There's just no protection provided for the infants." John Farrell, May 21/74

"Babies are now for sale. They are a valuable commodity on a growing Black Market, operated by lawyers and doctors who are playing on the heartaches and frustrations of childless couples." Jim Walker, May 21/74

"I think that some lawyers are doing something is legally acceptable but morally very reprehensible. They are selling babies to people who have the where withall to buy them." Steven Cole, May 23/74

"A second Philadelphia lawyer then contacted the Coles. This time the price of adoption was six (6) thousand dollars, and for a baby that had medical problems." Jim Walker, May 23/74

"The Baby Black Market tramples on couples emotions. Determines if they have a family, children to love," Jim Walker, May 23/74

"It's a commodity that they are going to sell, and that people are going to buy because its the dearest thing that people can have, I think is children." Steven Cole, May 23/74

"The system forces childless couples to pay high prices. But, it can also force them to lie in court." Jim Walker, May 24/74

"You can not go before a judge when you are finalizing your adoption and tell them you've paid \$ 5,000. They would never allow that adoption to become final." Eileen Skolnich, May 24/74

"I would perjure if I had the money and I wanted that baby." Eileen Skolnich, May 24/74

"When I get the answers that are acceptable there's nothing in this world I can possibly do... I'm stuck with it." Judge John Diggins, May 24/74

"A couple that already has a child and may have committed a perjury, is scared to come forward, for fear they might lose that child." Jim Walker, May 24/74

"I think its immoral to make them pay money out of line with the costs involved in an adoption." Dr. Alfred Kalonder, May 29/74

"The young lady was no longer to give the baby up for adoption... I learned subsequently, she had been contacted by an attorney from New York, and had been paid Ten Thousand Dollars for the Baby." Dr. Alfred Kalonder, May 29/74

"Doctors are human, and wherever there is opportunity for excessive profit, I'm sure there's going to be somebody that will profit from this." Dr. Louis Gerstely, May 29/74

"The Agonies of Adoption ... ALL because the Stork has a Price Tag." Jim Walker, May 29/74

WCAU-TV Information Sources

Jim Walker, Reporter  
WCAU-TV, Philadelphia, Penna.

William Klaus  
Director of Philadelphia Bar Association

Alvin Ackerman  
McClatchy Building  
Upper Darby, Philadelphia, Penna.

Nathan Posner  
Director of Philadelphia Bar Association

Alfred Kalonder, M.D.  
Obstetrics and Gynecology  
6816 Custor Avenue  
Philadelphia, Penna.

Eleen Goldblatt  
Philadelphia, Penna.

Dr. Louis Gerstely  
6816 Custor Avenue  
Obstetrics and Gynecology  
Philadelphia, Penna.

Sharon Horner  
Philadelphia Resident

John Farrell, Detective  
Public Safety Office  
Dade County, Florida

Judge John Diggins  
Delaware County Adoptions  
Delaware County, Penna.

Steven and Phyllis Cole  
Philadelphia Residents

Eileen Skolnich  
Philadelphia Resident

"Gray Market in Adoptions Busy Here"

Terrie Miller, Intelligencer Journal,  
Lancaster, Penna. September 12, 1974

"A few payments toward a young mother's hospital bill or living expenses might bring them a baby in a matter of a few months."

"Acquiring a child through the gray market suddenly seems to be the answer to unfulfilled dreams."

"It's very tempting for parents to go through private placement to get a child."  
Emily Mast of Family and Children's Services

"The 'Gray Market' earned its off color distinction because it treads a fine line between the right and wrong side of the law."

"Private Placement does, however, blossom in times of low supply and high demand, providing the basis for a full-fledged black market."

"We returned to the 'Black Market' of the 1950s about three years ago." Emily Mast, Family and Children's Services

"In Lancaster, there has been a 'Gray Market' in terms of paying the expenses of mothers." Arsenath McCollough, Family and Children's Services.

"Private placement offers no protection to the child." Emily Mast, Family and Children's Services

"There have been situations where the hospital bills and the initial expenses were paid when the child was put up to adoption." Jack Brignola, Bureau of Children's Services.

"Adoption through Family and Children's Services takes at least three years; through the Bureau of Children's Services it takes four to four and one-half years; and in Berks, Dauphin, Lebanon, Chester, York, and Cumberland, the wait is even longer."