

# Victim Personal Statement

*Daisy*

Carvel Bennett, you have caused total carnage, your act of violence decimated any potential relationship between my birth mother and I because you chose to rape a child.

You made the choice to rape a child, the daughter of your friend, what a betrayal of trust. You were never held to account by those who were supposed to protect my birth mother and other children. No one sought justice for the harm you caused.

You have evaded justice for 45 years. You have got to have a 'family life'. You had the opportunity to get married, have children, live with those children and watch them grow up.

Because you chose to rape a child I only had 7 days in hospital with my birth mother. I've read my grandmother visited and thought I looked like you. Imagine how that felt for my birth mother at 14 years old to look down at her baby and see the features of her rapist.

I can't imagine what it was like for my birth mother and I in those final moments together. I can only imagine the devastation of this separation on both. I was left in hospital alone for a further 3 days before joining my foster family. Who cares for me in that time? I'll never know. How terrifying; how traumatic.

For that separation to be replicated again 7 months later when I was placed from foster care to adoption, another bond and attachment broken.

You'll never know how difficult it was for me to grow up in a white family, in a white community, in a white village outside of a white town. A minority in my own family. I grew up with privilege, but there was a point every day when it felt like I needed a coat of armour to deal with the feelings of difference, having to justify my existence in some way. Looks of disbelief and confusion when I called out 'mum' to my blonde adoptive mother. Sometimes I just didn't to avoid the reaction of others. I experienced feelings of wanting to be invisible because of being black & adopted, and knowing nothing of my past. Invisibility was preferable to feeling so exposed as a black child in a white family. The times spent wondering who I looked like, why I wasn't with my birth mother, why hadn't I been wanted, with no one to share those feelings with.

The trauma of adoption on adoptees was not recognised when I was placed in 1976. Love was meant to be enough. It wasn't. There is growing understanding that adoption is traumatic, but adoptees like myself are still not invited to share our often painful experiences of adoption.

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Because you chose to rape a child I have had my birth identity stolen from me on my maternal and paternal sides. What has been passed down to me is intergenerational-trauma, a family heirloom I'd rather not have.

You'll never know how aware I was of my difference in addition to having little knowledge about my birth family. To then learn at 18 years old that I was conceived in rape added to the layers of complexity for me in terms of my identity. To know I exist because you chose to rape a child, to know that I am for some, the embodiment of one of the worst things that could happen to someone, to be pregnant by your perpetrator. To find out what you did to my birth mother was horrifying and could have been a reason for her to not want to meet me. That horrendous thought that we may never meet because of what you did weighed heavily until we were able to reunite.

I am more than evidence, I am more than a witness, I am more than a 'product' of rape. I am not your shame and I will not carry the shame and horror of what you chose to do.

Because you chose to rape a child I have sacrificed much to pursue justice and for rape conceived people like myself to be seen & heard. We are not our fathers sins, we are not rape babies, we are not the 'rape clause' for benefits, we are not the 'the bad seed'.

Because you chose to rape a child I have had to fight to be recognised as a victim of your crime to try and spare my birth mother from having to testify. Because you chose to rape a child and the justice system won't recognise my existence, my birth mother has had to relive her ordeal to seek justice. This legal process has caused further complexities in the relationship between myself and my birth mother, in my opinion, a deeper split, which is utterly tragic. Because you chose to rape a child we are still paying the price.

It's taken me incredible strength over the last few years to keep fighting for justice. I've had feelings of utter hopelessness, treated with hostility, or simply ignored, invisible. This is a fight I had to take on, the injustice was just too unpalatable. You need to be made accountable for the crime you committed. You'll never truly understand the devastating impact your act of rape on a child has had on two children and the lifelong implications this had had on us both as adults.

This sentence is 46 years overdue, the pain you have caused immeasurable.