

[Transcript] Casefile True Crime / Case 256: Jill Rosenthal

We are thrilled to announce that case file presents Crime Interrupted is returning for a second season.

The first series of Crime Interrupted, researched and written by Vicky Betraydis, delved into some of the biggest cases investigated by the Australian Federal Police, Australia's National Law Enforcement Agency.

Season 2 picks up where Season 1 left off, featuring in-depth interviews with the officers who solved some of the AFP's most challenging cases.

Once again, we've been given exclusive access to their case vault, so you can learn more about fighting crime in Australia at a national level.

We have just released episode 5 of Season 2, which focuses on an investigation dubbed Operation Berks.

When an urgent cybersecurity fraud case landed on the desk of AFP investigators that revealed a syndicate was stealing money from Australian superannuation and share trading accounts, a race against time to stop millions of dollars in theft ensued.

The team had to unravel a complex web of false accounts to find how the syndicate was exploiting vulnerabilities in the system.

Burner phones and a cabab order would become crucial clues in the case.

The first five episodes of Crime Interrupted Season 2 are out now wherever you get your podcasts.

All remaining episodes will be released on a monthly schedule.

Be sure to hit subscribe so you don't miss each new episode, and if you haven't already heard Season 1, you can go back and listen now.

Our episodes deal with serious and often distressing incidents.

If you feel at any time you need support, please contact your local crisis centre.

For suggested phone numbers for confidential support and for a more detailed list of content warnings, please see the show notes for this episode on your app or on our website.

Today's episode involves crimes against children and won't be suitable for all listeners.

28-year-old Dora Fronzak was elated when she gave birth to a healthy baby boy on Sunday, April 26, 1964, in Chicago's Michael Race Hospital.

Ten months earlier in the same ward of the same hospital, Dora had gone through labour for the first time.

That child, Dora's first son, had been stillborn.

But this time all had gone well.

Dora and her husband Chester named their baby boy Paul Joseph Fronzak.

Paul weighed 7lbs 2oz and he had an olive complexion and dark hair, just like his parents.

At around 1.40pm on Monday, April 27, Dora lay in her hospital bed nursing Paul.

Chester was at work and would be joining them later that day.

As Dora cradled her one-day-old son, a middle-aged nurse walked into the room.

She was wearing the standard nurse's uniform of the day, a white smocked dress with white shoes and stockings.

A white hair-neck covered her graying brown hair.

In a calm, authoritative voice, the nurse told Dora,

◆One of the pediatricians wants to examine your son.

I need to take him now.◆

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Dora found it slightly odd that a doctor would interrupt her baby's feeding time to perform an examination, but assumed they had their reasons.

She handed Paul over to the nurse.

He was swaddled in a white cotton blanket, and the nurse held him tightly to her as she left the room.

Ten minutes later, at 1.50pm, a nurse named Martha Vincent headed to room 418 to collect Paul Fronsack from his mother.

Paul had been taken to Dora for feeding 40 minutes earlier and would be ready to go back to the nursery by now.

When Martha entered the twin room that Dora shared with another new mother, she was surprised to see Paul was already gone.

◆Where's your baby?

I need to take him back to the nursery,◆ Martha said.

Dora explained that another nurse had already taken him.

Martha immediately knew that something was wrong.

She was the nurse assigned to the hospital's newborn nursery, and no one else had any cause to take Paul.

Not wanting to alarm Dora, however, Martha said nothing.

She calmly left the room, then rushed to notify the hospital's chief of security.

Every other staff member in the maternity ward was asked if they knew who the mystery nurse was.

A young nurse's aide said she had seen the woman hurrying down the corridor with Paul 10 minutes earlier.

Another nurse had seen her go into a stairwell with the baby.

It was clear that the woman had not really been a nurse.

Nobody at the hospital knew her identity, and although she had on the typical nurse's uniform, she wasn't wearing the white cap that all the other nurses at the Michael Race Hospital wore.

Over the next hour, the hospital was searched from top to bottom, but it appeared that the woman and Paul Franzak were long gone.

This was confirmed when a laboratory assistant from the hospital's pathology unit said that he had seen the woman exit the building with Paul in her arms, then walk away down 29th Street.

At 2.45pm, just over one hour after the woman had taken Paul, hospital staff called the Chicago Police Department to report a kidnapping.

The case immediately went to the top of the department's list.

Police issued an all-points bulletin and ordered a doorknock on every property in the 10 blocks surrounding the hospital.

Two lieutenants, six sergeants, several patrol officers, and four detectives from the homicide division were all assigned to the case, along with nine FBI agents.

The task of notifying Paul's parents also fell to law enforcement.

Chester Franzak worked as a machinist at a factory, and that morning he had gone into work as a proud new father.

He had taken a box of cigars to hand out to colleagues in celebration of Paul's birth.

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At around 3pm, the police called Chester's workplace and told him over the phone, your son is missing.

Chester rushed to his wife's side.

The desperate search for Paul Franzak had been kept a secret from Dora as hospital staff didn't want to alarm her.

Chester was the one who had to break the news to her.

He knelt by her bed and held her hand as he told her their son had been taken.

At the same time, technicians from Chicago's PD's crime lab were dispatched to Dora's hospital room so it could be fingerprinted and photographed.

It is questioned to Dora, who was distraught.

She told them she hadn't gotten a good look at the kidnapper, but she revealed that the woman's visit to her room that afternoon hadn't been the first time Dora had seen her.

Hours earlier, at about 9.30am, Dora had been giving Paul his morning feed when the woman in the nurse's uniform walked in.

She had walked over to Dora's bed and lifted the blue cotton blanket that was wrapped around Paul, exposing his face.

She had stared at Paul for a long moment.

Then she covered him with the blanket again and left the room.

She never uttered a word.

Dora's roommate Joyce remembered that earlier incident as well, and like Dora, she'd thought the woman was a nurse.

She told investigators that nothing about it had seemed strange at the time, except for the fact that the woman hadn't spoken.

Joyce had thought the woman had a rather cold demeanor, stating,

I didn't get the impression that she was a motherly, kindly sort of woman.

Multiple other witnesses were able to provide a detailed description of the woman.

She was reported as being white, between 35 and 45 years old, about 5'5 inches tall, and approximately 145 pounds.

Her brown hair was graying, and she had a ruddy complexion with red cheeks.

Other women staying in the maternity ward had also encountered her.

Earlier that same morning, she had entered the room next door to Dora's, where two expectant mothers were staying.

When they asked the kidnapper what she wanted, she told them she was from the hospital's eye, ear, nose, and throat department.

Then she quickly left.

Another woman who was staying in room 425 had also received a visit from the kidnapper.

The kidnapper had quickly inspected the woman's newborn baby, as she had done with Paul Franzak.

Not only had the kidnapper spent at least four hours that day wandering around the maternity ward, she had been seen there the day before as well.

One of the hospital's cleaners said that a woman matching her description had approached and offered to help fold linens.

This had struck the cleaner as a bit strange.

Nurses didn't usually help out with the laundry.

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But she hadn't thought enough of the incident to say anything until she heard about Paul Fronzak's kidnapping.

None of the hospital staff knew or recognized the kidnapper.

But during her time there, she'd gained knowledge about the building's layout and the schedules of the maternity ward nurses.

It was evident to investigators that the kidnapper had been trawling the maternity ward in search of an infant to steal.

Perhaps she'd thought that by helping to fold linen she could gain access to the nursery, where all the babies were kept when not with their mothers.

When this plan had failed, she'd decided to take a baby from a hospital room instead.

They had no idea why she had ultimately settled on Dora and Chester Fronzak's son.

The Chicago Police Department contacted local taxi companies and asked them to broadcast an alert to their drivers about the kidnapping.

When 34-year-old cab driver Lee Kelsey heard the message, he immediately phoned the police.

Lee had been parked outside Michael Race Hospital on the afternoon of Monday, April 27, hoping for a customer.

The cab stand where he was waiting had a telephone where bookings came through.

It rang and Lee answered it.

A woman on the other end told him she was inside the hospital's butler building and needed a cab shortly.

Confused, Lee told her there was no butler building.

The woman clarified by saying she was just south of the main building and on her way down.

She would meet him outside when she got there and told him to, quote, look for a nurse.

Lee drove around the corner to 29th Street and waited.

Three minutes later, a woman in a nurse's uniform appeared.

She was carrying a baby swaddled in a blanket.

She perfectly matched the description of the kidnapper that would be issued later that day.

The kidnapper asked Lee to take her south to 35th Street and Union Avenue.

He dropped her off there, then continued on his way.

Lee didn't see where the woman had gone after that.

He was sure he had picked up the woman once before.

On that occasion, he'd collected her at 35th and Wallace Street, then dropped her at a restaurant.

He'd returned her to the 35th and Wallace area later on.

Lee told the police he didn't have an address for her, but it seemed that was her neighborhood.

Chicago PD dispatched several officers to search the 35th Street vicinity, but the trail went cold.

Soon, the entirety of Chicago was being searched for baby Paul Franzach.

It was the largest manhunt the city had ever seen.

By the end of the first day, roughly 200 police officers and FBI special agents had covered Chicago's south side, searching 600 homes and questioning more than a thousand people.

During the days that followed, over 2,600 hospital employees were interviewed, and hundreds

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of registered nurses had their files examined by investigators. Detectives were working off the assumption that the kidnapper might have been a nurse who had lost a child or been unable to have one. Motivated by the desire to have a baby, she had decided to steal a newborn. But nothing resulted from this line of inquiry. Newspapers published police sketches of the kidnapper based on witness descriptions. The one and only photograph that existed of Paul Franzach was also shared. It had been snapped shortly after his birth and showed Paul lying on a white sheet with his head turned to one side. He was dressed in a nappy and a small white shirt with an ID bracelet on one wrist. A handwritten card on his stomach detailed his name and weight. It turned out that Paul also had an allergy that meant he couldn't have cow's milk, so newspapers published detailed recipes for a safe formula he could be fed. Hundreds of tips flooded into the Chicago Police Department and a makeshift FBI office set up at Michael Race Hospital. Some of these were prank calls, but others seemed promising. It was reported that three months earlier, a woman wearing a nurse's uniform had entered another Chicago hospital. She had started picking up babies from their nursery cribs and remarked that the facilities there were much cleaner than the ones at Michael Race Hospital. Soon, staff has realized the woman didn't work there and she was removed from the premises. Investigators tried to track this woman down, but she was never identified. One caller said they knew a woman who had formerly been a nurse in several maternity wards. When her ex-husband was given custody of their children, she tried to burn down his house. Another call came in from someone who'd overheard their taxi driver taking credit for the crime. A telephone operator listening in on a call reported hearing something similar from someone else. But none of these leads went anywhere. People reported women they knew who resembled the sketch of the kidnapper. Other women were reported after strangers saw them on public transport, seemingly trying to conceal infants they were carrying from view. However, every woman who was reported had an alibi for the time of the kidnapping. And the mothers seemingly hiding their children from sight were actually protecting them from Chicago's cold weather. Every lead seemed to fizzle out and soon investigators stopped sharing as much information with the media, with an FBI spokesperson explaining. We defeat our own purpose if we let the kidnapper know what we're doing to find her. Meanwhile, Dora and Chester Franzach were trying their best to cope. Dora remained in hospital but was moved from a shared suite to a single room for privacy. She kept a baby pool's photograph in a wooden frame by her bed. Doctors monitored Dora constantly and gave her sedatives at night to help her sleep. Her room was guarded by police at all times so that journalists and members of the public could be kept away.

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The only people permitted to see Dora were her husband, family members, investigators, and the hospital's Roman Catholic chaplain.

As a staunch Catholic, Dora found hope in the news that masses and convents all over the country were praying for the safe return of her son.

She received cards and letters from far-flung destinations like Russia and Brazil, from strangers who sympathized with her tragedy.

But not everyone was kind.

At one point, a doctor from the hospital told Dora she should have known that the kidnapper wasn't a real nurse because she hadn't been wearing a cap.

He scolded her for handing over her baby.

His words left Dora with feelings of guilt and bitterness.

She had thought she was safe in a hospital and was angered by his suggestion that it was her responsibility to recognize a potential kidnapper.

Dora drew strength from her husband, Chester, who remained supportive and loving, never once blaming her for what had happened.

Two days after Paul was kidnapped, his father, Chester, appeared at a press conference at the urging of police.

He found it difficult to speak and fought back tears as he was asked if he had anything to say to the kidnapper.

Quote, I hope she takes care of the baby.

I plead with her to return him.

The following day, Dora also managed to issue a public plea via the media.

She appeared in a wheelchair in the hospital's lobby, her eyes red from crying, and stated, All I can say is that this woman must have been desperate for a baby to do such a horrible thing.

Take good care of him and see that he gets enough to eat.

He is everything we built our hopes on for the future.

Please, return the baby to us.

On Tuesday, May 5, just over a week after her son's kidnapping, Dora Franzach was discharged from the hospital.

She and Chester were driven home in an unmarked police car.

The couple lived in an attic apartment of Chester's parents' home.

Over weeks, Dora refused to leave the apartment except to attend mass once a day.

She didn't want to socialise with friends or participate in activities that had interested her prior to having Paul.

She wanted to be home when the phone finally rang with the news that Paul had been found.

Two FBI agents set up recording equipment in the den of the house so they could tape every call that came through.

For 24 hours a day, two agents remained in the Franzach residence and took responsibility for monitoring the family's phone at all times.

They waited for someone to call with a ransom demand or some other information relating to the kidnapping.

But there was nothing.

After two weeks, one of the agents was taken off the job.

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The other remained for another week just in case anything came in. But nothing did, and after three weeks, the FBI ended the detail altogether. As time wore on, investigators occasionally received tip-offs from the public. A woman who owned a restaurant a couple of hours west of Chicago noticed a couple come in one morning carrying a baby. They asked her if they could wash the baby and have some milk. The restaurant owner said sure, then asked how old the infant was. Three weeks, I think, answered the woman. The restaurant owner quickly called the police to report the strange incident, but by the time they arrived at the scene, the couple had driven away with the infant in a Chevrolet. Although surveillance was set up around the restaurant's vicinity, the couple were never seen again. An abandoned baby found in Georgia seemed like the breakthrough investigators were waiting for, but the child wasn't poor. One day, Dora Fronzak received a call demanding \$10,000 in exchange for her baby. She was to place the cash in a bag and leave it in the lobby of a particular Chicago building. Dora notified the police, who arranged a sting operation with a female officer disguised as Dora. The officer dropped off a bag filled with the newspaper clippings at the building. A young woman soon came to collect it. There was no sign of poor. Police arrested the woman and quickly discovered that she wasn't the kidnapper. She'd just conceived of the ruse as an extortion plot. Weeks and months continued to pass. Poor Fronzak's first birthday came and went in April of 1965. By this point, the tip-off center leads had almost stopped entirely. FBI agents working the investigation were reassigned, and detectives moved on to focus on new cases. The kidnapping of poor Fronzak had well and truly gone cold. Case file will be back shortly. Thank you for supporting us by listening to this episode's sponsors. Too busy achieving all your day-to-day goals to cook, but want to make sure you're eating well? With Factor, skip the extra trip to the grocery store and the chopping, prepping and cleaning up too, while still getting the flavor and nutritional quality you need. Factor's fresh, never-frozen meals are ready in just two minutes, so all you have to do is heat and enjoy, then get back to crushing your goals. Factor is America's number one ready-to-eat meal kit, and with meals delivered straight to your door, you'll save time, eat well, and stay on track with your healthy lifestyle. Choose from over 34 weekly, flavor-packed, dietitian-approved meals and level up with gourmet plus options, prepared to perfection by chefs and ready-to-eat in record time. Heat yourself to upscale meals with premium ingredients like a broccolini, leeks, truffle butter and asparagus. Case file team member Rotavia tells me that Factor meals are like something you'd expect

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to eat at a fancy restaurant.

Her favorite is the vegetarian green chili tostada bake with corn salsa and sour cream, but she also loves the fruit smoothies for a quick on-the-go meal.

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Friday, July 2, 1965 was a warm but slightly cloudy day in the city of Newark, New Jersey.

The downtown strip of Broad Street was bustling as shoppers moved between the stores that dotted the popular destination.

High-end department stores were what Broad Street was known for, leading to the area being dubbed Lady's Mile.

One such store was McCrory's, which sat in a four-story building on the corner of Broad and Cedar Streets.

On the second floor was an expensive restaurant that was almost as popular as the store itself.

Customers and trains stopped nearby, making the area one of New Jersey's busiest thoroughfares.

At about 3pm on that Friday, someone pushed a baby pram up to the entrance of McCrory's.

Sitting inside the pram was a little boy who looked to be just over a year or so old.

He was wearing a blue suit with a matching blue cap.

The person pushing the boy's pram parked it near the front door of the department store, then turned and walked away, leaving the boy alone.

Shoppers and pedestrians continued to pass by the pram with the little boy inside, but didn't seem concerned by seeing a toddler left alone.

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It was two hours before somebody called the police to report the abandoned child.

Whoever placed the call refused to give their name.

One time after 5pm, officers arrived at the scene and found the pram with the boy inside as described.

The child had a runny nose and a cold.

He also had the remnants of a black eye.

The boy was taken to Newark Hospital for an assessment, and a detective from the city's police department was assigned to the case.

The boy's age was estimated to be around 14 months old.

He was 30 inches tall and weighed 20 pounds.

Aside from the cold and the fading bruise by his left eye, he was in good health.

Detective Joseph Farrell was tasked with finding the boy's identity.

As there were no surveillance cameras outside McCrory's department store, the detective had no footage of the moment the toddler was abandoned, nor had any witnesses come forward to report seeing it happen.

He knew the rough timeframe from when people had started noticing the boy, but there was zero information about who had left him there.

Detective Farrell believed the child had most likely been abandoned by someone who had wanted him to be discovered and well cared for.

He hadn't been taken to a remote area and left in a poor condition.

Instead, the perpetrator had dressed him nicely and deliberately taken him to a busy intersection frequented by wealthy shoppers.

Presumably they felt unable to care for him themselves, so they had tried to ensure his safety another way.

Detective Farrell ran a series of ads about the abandoned toddler he knew Jersey and New York newspapers.

As well as containing details about his discovery, they asked anyone with information about the case to contact police.

The ads ran for a few days, but only one call came through.

It turned out to be unrelated to the boy who'd been found.

Detective Farrell was having no luck figuring out where the toddler had come from.

He suspected that whoever had abandoned him wasn't from Newark at all.

Then, Detective Farrell remembered the case of Paul Franzach, who had been kidnapped from a Chicago hospital 15 months earlier.

The case had made national and international headlines, so even though the detective resided almost 800 miles away in a different part of the country, he remembered it well.

Detective Farrell found a photo of baby Paul Franzach and compared it to one taken of the abandoned toddler.

He also examined photos of Paul's parents, Dora and Chester Franzach.

The detective could see a resemblance.

The toddler also looked to be the same age that Paul would be by now.

Detective Farrell sent a letter to Chicago's chief of detectives, officially requesting the Paul Franzach case file.

Investigators in Chicago were excited to receive the detective's letter.

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In the 15 months since Paul Franzach had vanished, they had submitted around 10,000 children to medical tests in an attempt to see if they could be baby Paul.

All of them had been excluded.

Because DNA wasn't accessible at the time, investigators had no way of definitively comparing Paul Franzach's genetics to any other child.

But they could test their blood to see if that provided any clues.

There were between 15 and 20 tests available that gave information about blood group factors, including blood type and whether an individual had a presence or absence of protein on their red blood cells.

By collecting all of these details, experts could make an educated guess as to whether one individual could be related to another.

Comparing hand and footprints was another method of identification, but Paul had been kidnapped before the hospital had taken his prints.

However, they did have a photo of newborn Paul that provided a clear view of his left ear.

It was believed that by examining the ridges, slope and shape of someone's ear, you could confirm their true identity.

After being found outside the department store, the abandoned toddler had been transferred to a private adoption home owned by a middle-aged couple and their daughter.

The couple had nicknamed him Scott.

FBI agents arranged for Scott to have his blood taken and made a mold of his left ear.

Then they waited for experts to analyse this information.

By March 1966, eight months after Scott was found, the FBI had reached a conclusion.

Scott was the only child out of 10,000 tested who could possibly be Paul Franzach.

Adding further weight to this finding was a letter from an official at the New Jersey Bureau of Children's Services, which expressed their absolute certainty that Scott was Paul. Dora and Chester Franzach had tried their best to move forward in the two years after their baby was kidnapped.

Initially, Dora had kept a close eye on the time passing, hoping that the perpetrator would make contact on a meaningful date.

Mother's Day was two weeks after Paul's kidnapping.

Then a week after that was her and Chester's wedding anniversary.

But these days came and went with no news of Paul.

Eventually, Dora lost track of time altogether.

In March 1966, one month before Paul's second birthday, Dora and Chester filed a lawsuit against Michael Race Hospital.

They were accusing the hospital of negligence in allowing an unauthorised person in the maternity ward.

The couple was seeking \$1 million for grief, pain, mental anguish and anxiety.

Just three weeks after the suit was filed, the Franzachs received a letter from the FBI.

It informed them that an unknown male child had been found in Newark, New Jersey.

Blood testing had indicated it was possible he was their kidnapped son.

The FBI asked the Franzachs to travel to New Jersey to identify their child for themselves.

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The Franzachs made the 800-mile road trip east to New Jersey. Arrangements had been made for them to meet Scott at the Office of the State's Adoption Bureau.

The couple were rushed into an empty room and waited with a caseworker.

Then the door opened and another caseworker walked in with Scott, who was dressed in a white jumper suit with matching socks and shoes.

Almost immediately, Dora cried out,

My God, that is my baby.

Although the Franzachs recognised Paul as their son, they still had to legally adopt him as there was no way to prove he was biologically theirs.

They had already been pre-approved and the initial process only took a few days.

Then the reunited family made the journey back home to Chicago, where a large crowd of journalists were waiting for them.

Dora and Dora were tight-lipped and gave little away as they carried Paul into their house.

The next day, they had Paul baptised at their Catholic Church and the trio began settling into life together.

The fact that Paul had been returned to them after more than two years seemed to the Franzachs like a miracle.

By the end of the year, the family of three was joined by one more.

After 15 months without Paul, Dora and Chester had made the difficult decision to try for another baby.

When they received a word that Paul had been found in New Jersey, Dora had just become pregnant.

In December 1966, Dora gave birth to another healthy baby boy, who was named David.

The Franzachs were finally able to move forward as a family.

Eight years later, in December 1974, the Franzach family were preparing to celebrate Christmas.

One day, when Chester was at work and Dora was busy with something, the now ten-year-old Paul Franzach decided to snoop around the family's house, looking for Christmas presents.

Knowing his parents would hide any gifts they bought for him and his brother, Paul thought the basement's crawl space would be a good spot to check.

He crept downstairs and moved an old sofa that sat in front of the door to the crawl space.

Then he opened the three-by-four foot wooden door and squeezed inside.

The crawl space was full of old clothes, books and holiday decorations.

Exploring the area on his hands and knees, Paul looked for anything that looked like a possible gift.

In one corner behind some framed paintings were several shoeboxes and a hat box.

Paul opened them.

All four boxes were filled with old newspaper clippings and letters.

Headlines for the articles described the search for a stolen baby.

One article featured a photograph of Paul's parents.

As Paul started to read the articles, he realized that they were all about him.

He had never been told of his kidnapping, so the news was shocking and distressing.

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Other articles detailed how he had been found more than a year later and eventually reunited with his parents.

The letters were mostly from strangers, sympathizing with the family after Paul's kidnapping. After that day, Paul took a handful of the news clippings and showed them to his mother, asking if they were really about him.

Dora told Paul off for snooping, before admitting,

Yes, those are about you.

You were kidnapped.

We found you.

We love you.

And that is all there is to know.

Paul tried to forget the clippings.

It was clear that his parents found the kidnapping too painful to discuss.

Over the years, Paul grew up, relocated to the city of Las Vegas, pursued different careers and married then divorced.

When he was in his 40s, he began a relationship with a woman named Michelle.

The two got engaged and Michelle became pregnant with a baby girl.

Paul Franzach was excited to become a father.

During one of Michelle's regular checkups, her obstetrician asked Paul about his family's medical history.

The question caused Paul to confront some suspicions he'd long since buried.

Ever since Paul was a small child, he'd felt like he didn't quite belong.

After he'd learned of his kidnapping, Paul began to doubt whether he was related to the Franzachs at all.

He had always felt different to his parents and brother.

He looked very different to them.

Paul had sandy hair and a face with an angular bone structure with a strong jaw.

His father and brother David shared the same roundish face with slightly droopy eyes.

David also had the same dark hair as Chester and Dora.

Paul felt isolated in terms of his likes and interests as well.

He was obsessed with music, which was a passion no one else in his family shared.

Paul was free-spirited and slightly rebellious, where David was more serious and conservative, like their strict Catholic parents.

Discovering the newspaper clippings in the crawl space had finally provided some kind of explanation for Paul's feeling of disconnection.

But when his mother had insisted that he was their son, Paul knew it would be futile to question them further.

Plus, it didn't seem like there was any way to know for sure whether he was really poor Franzach or not.

Over the decades that followed, awareness around DNA and genetics began to spread and DNA testing became increasingly accessible and affordable.

All of a sudden, it seems that Paul had an easy way to find out the truth of his identity.

And now that he was preparing to become a father, he felt he had an obligation to discover the truth, not just for himself, but for his baby.

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In 2012, shortly after the birth of Paul's daughter, his parents came to visit.

Paul asked if they would be willing to give him a sample of their DNA so they could find out once and for all if he really was Paul Franzach.

Although they hadn't discussed Paul's kidnapping with him in more than 30 years, Dora and Chester agreed.

Paul pulled out some paternity test kits he'd purchased from a pharmacy.

Dora and Chester both swapped their mouths and Paul organised the test kits for analysis.

Not long after leaving Las Vegas, Dora called Paul to say they had changed their minds, telling him, we don't want the test, we don't want to know.

But after debating the matter privately for a couple of weeks, Paul posted the kits to the testing company's lab.

A couple of weeks later, he received a call from a company representative.

We have the test results, the representative said.

There is no remote possibility that you are the son of Dora and Chester Franzach.

In 1966, Dora Franzach had immediately recognised Paul as her missing son upon meeting him.

But others had always had doubts.

Staffers from New Jersey's Bureau of Children Services had compared Paul's appearance to photographs of the Franzachs.

At least one believed that Paul resembled Dora from the front and had the same profile as Chester.

This led to the agency informing the FBI that they were certain Paul was the missing child.

However, others noticed that Paul actually bore little similarity to the couple or the picture of newborn Paul.

His hair was sandy coloured instead of dark, his face had a rectangular shape, while theirs was rounder.

The blood tests had excluded Paul as being related to the Franzachs, but nothing about them had confirmed it either.

Investigators had decided to have the Franzachs meet the child, just in case.

In private, they admitted that the child wasn't the real Paul Franzach.

A lieutenant from the Chicago Police Department who'd worked on the original kidnapping case told his family he was certain the Franzachs had the wrong child.

The special agent in charge of the FBI's Chicago Bureau agreed with him.

But they felt sorry for what the Franzachs had gone through and knew they would provide the boy with a good home.

Although Dora Franzach had seemingly recognised Paul right away, she would admit decades later that she'd always had doubts.

But she desperately wanted Paul to be her missing son.

Regardless of whether the abandoned boy was related to her or not, it was clear that he needed parents.

Dora felt that she and Chester could save him.

She also worried that if they didn't claim him as theirs, they might be judged for rejecting him.

After a DNA test definitively proved that Paul Franzach wasn't Dora and Chester's son, he was left with several mysteries.

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Who was he, and how had he come to be abandoned?

And where was the real Paul Franzach?

Paul decided to go public with his story, believing it was the best chance he had of answering these questions.

He reached out to George Knapp, an award-winning television journalist based in Las Vegas.

George agreed to cover the story, and in April 2013 his report aired on the local news.

Soon a station in Chicago picked it up, and within days it had gone national.

Paul Franzach was inundated with interview requests and messages from viewers all over the country.

One message was from an FBI special agent who said the FBI would reopen the case.

Another was from renowned genetic genealogist C.C. Moore, who offered to help Paul trace his true identity.

Working with a team of three other researchers, C.C. Moore began trying to trace Paul's heritage by uploading his DNA to several online databases.

Such databases were typically used by people interested in tracking their family trees and finding out more about their ancestry.

C.C. and her team were able to slowly chip away at the project by identifying Paul's genetic relatives who had uploaded their DNA online.

Initially, they only found distant cousins.

They worked on the project for more than a year.

Then one afternoon, C.C. contacted Paul and asked him,

What do you think of the name Jack?

Paul said he liked it.

Then C.C. told him,

Well, that is your name.

There's something else.

You have a twin sister.

And her name is Jill.

Case file will be back shortly.

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By supporting our sponsors, you support Case File to continue to deliver quality content. Located in south of Jersey on Absecon Island, Atlantic City is New Jersey's most famous resort town.

Best known for its casinos, beaches and iconic boardwalk, the city also has an infamous reputation thanks to its history of organized crime.

In the early 1960s, married couple Gilbert and Marie Rosenthal lived in Atlantic City with their two young daughters, Linda and Karen.

On Sunday, October 27, 1963, the couple had two more children.

Marie Rosenthal gave birth to a set of twins, a boy and a girl they named Jack and Jill.

A brief snippet about the births ran in a local newspaper as October 27 was also the birthday of the Rosenthal's oldest child.

The twins had been born at a difficult time for the Rosenthal's.

Gilbert had served in the Korean War about 10 years earlier and suffered a bad injury.

He had returned to the United States with severe back pain and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Marie struggled with raising so many young children and turned to alcohol as a coping mechanism.

Over time, she neglected to pay the household bills.

By November 1964, Marie was eight months pregnant with the couple's fifth child, Fred.

Around the same time, they lost their home due to missed mortgage repayments.

The family had to move in with Gilbert's mother before later finding a home in a public housing development.

This series of events led to Gilbert walking out on his family for six months, returning by the summer of 1965.

Barbara Rosenthal was Marie's sister-in-law as she was married to Gilbert's brother.

Once a year, she and her husband, Leonard, would travel to visit Gilbert and Marie.

During some of these visits, Barbara noticed that Jack and Jill were covered with small marks that looked like cigarette burns.

Worried that the infants might be victims of abuse, Barbara spoke to her doctor about it.

She told her to mind her own business, quote, you don't live with them, keep your nose out of it.

Barbara's daughter, Melanie, was five or six years old at the time.

On the rare occasions that she met her young cousins, she noticed that they were always screaming.

Their mother, Marie, also complained about this, telling her relatives that the infants cried constantly.

When Melanie spoke to her parents about the twins, they told her that the Rosenthal's

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believed they were intellectually disabled.

On one visit to the Rosenthal's home, Melanie entered to hear the twins wailing.

Unable to see them, she went looking for them around the house.

At the back was a bedroom with a closed door.

Melanie pushed the door open.

Inside it was dark.

Melanie could see a wooden, crate-like structure that looked like a cage.

Both twins were restrained inside, bawling.

Susan Warlett was 14 years old in the late summer of 1965.

She worked regularly as a babysitter in an Atlantic City public housing development known as Pitney Village.

One day, an elegant, well-dressed woman approached her.

Susan recognised the woman as Marie Rosenthal, who lived in a house nearby with her husband and two daughters.

By this time, the family had left the house they'd lost due to missed mortgage payments and moved into one of Pitney Village's public housing properties.

Susan had seen how Marie doted on her girls.

Marie asked Susan if she could watch her children that night, as she and her husband were going out for a special occasion and wouldn't be home until the next morning.

Susan agreed and headed to the family's two-story brick-row house that evening.

Inside, the home was small but clean and tidy.

Marie and Gilbert Rosenthal were dressed up in their finest clothes, while four and three-year-olds Linda and Karen were also well-dressed.

Marie gave Susan some details about her daughter's care before adding in an offhand way.

Oh, and the twins are upstairs, but you don't have to bother with them.

Just leave them alone upstairs.

The couple left, and Susan was left shocked.

She'd had no idea there were more children.

Not feeling capable of caring for them all on her own, she called her sister and asked her to come over and help.

While Susan's sister minded the two older girls, Susan went upstairs to check on the twins.

The second story was completely silent.

After looking around the hallway at the different rooms, Susan noticed two closed doors to the left.

Opening the first one, she saw a dark room, dimly lit by a window that allowed in some of the dusk light.

Next to the window was a crib with two toddlers inside.

The girl, Jill Rosenthal, stood and watched Susan silently.

Her brother Jack cowered in a corner of the crib and whimpered.

Both were wearing pajamas and their nappies were soiled.

Moving closer, Susan saw that the crib's sheets were filthy and Jack had a black eye.

He was holding a bottle, but the milk had curdled inside.

As far as Susan could see, there was nothing wrong with the twins, except that they were

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neglected.

Susan scooped up Jack and held him for a little while before cleaning him up in the bathroom. When she changed his nappy, she saw he had a rash and blisters.

So did Jill.

It looked as though neither of them had been changed in a while.

After bathing the twins, Susan put them in fresh pajamas, changed their bedding and got them fresh milk.

She spent most of the night accompanying them in their room.

When Marie and Gilbert Rosenthal returned early in the morning, Susan told them how she'd cared for the twins.

Marie was irate and started screaming.

I told you not to do that.

I told you not to go upstairs.

You shouldn't have gone up there.

I told you not to bother the twins.

Obviously you don't listen very well.

Upset, Susan replied.

I do listen, but they're just babies.

Then she ran from the house without being paid.

Susan was scared.

She was haunted by the image of the neglected twins in their crib, but also terrified that she had done something wrong.

A few days later, a friend of hers who also lived in the neighborhood told Susan that the Rosenthal twins had vanished.

No one seemed to know what happened to the two young toddlers in the late summer of 1965. Their cousin Melanie said that when her family paid their annual visit that year, they were gone.

Jack and Jill weren't discussed, and Melanie's father, Leonard, told her never to mention them again.

He said he suspected Marie and Gilbert had killed the toddlers and buried them in their yard due to their being intellectually disabled.

Leonard told Melanie that if she ever spoke of the twins to her other relatives, it would start a family war.

Despite Leonard's suspicions, Jack Rosenthal was found alive and mostly well on Friday, July 2, 1965.

Someone had left him in a pram outside McCrory's department store in Newark, New Jersey. Newark was about a two-hour drive north of Atlantic City, where the Rosenthals lived.

It was unknown who abandoned Jack at the store or where his sister Jill had gone.

Fifty years later, the man who had been raised as kidnap victim Paul Fronsack discovered he had been born Jack Rosenthal.

Everything that Paul had been raised to believe about himself suddenly changed.

He discovered that although he'd been brought up in the Catholic faith, he was actually Jewish.

Most shocking of all was the revelation that he had a twin sister.

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Paul had always felt a lack of belonging, but not the sense that a part of him was missing, as some people who have been separated from twins have reported.

But now he knew about Jill, he was determined to track her down.

Paul began reaching out to his biological relatives.

Paul discovered that his older sister Karen had died in 2010 at the age of 47.

However, there were two surviving siblings and members of the extended family Paul could contact.

He received a mixed response.

Some, such as his aunt Barbara and cousin Melanie, were happy to talk with him, though they didn't know much about what had happened to him or Jill.

His biological siblings, Linda and Fred, were more reluctant.

Fred said he had no memory of the twins and was shocked to even learn of their existence.

As Fred had only been a few months old when the twins disappeared, his assertion made sense.

When he found out he'd had two more siblings he never knew about, Fred told Paul,

I feel sick.

If you are Jack, I am so sorry that this has happened to you, and I want to know what happened to Jill.

The pair initially exchanged a number of emails and discussed plans to meet in person.

But then Fred suddenly emailed Paul to say he wanted nothing more to do with him and asked Paul not to contact him again.

Linda also claimed to have no memory or knowledge of the twins.

As she was about four years old when they vanished, Paul found this strange.

Linda told Paul that their father had been cruel.

The family dynamic she described was one of dysfunction, with the members having drifted apart from each other over time.

Like Fred, Linda initially seemed happy to get to know her long lost brother.

Then suddenly, she stopped answering Paul's phone calls and refused to speak to him again.

According to the biological relatives Paul tracked down, the Rosenthal family had a history of conflict and intergenerational trauma.

His cousin Melanie told him that her father, Leonard, who was Gilbert Rosenthal's brother, had been violent and abusive towards her and her mother.

She no longer had a relationship with her father, but Paul was able to track the now elderly Leonard down to a hospital where he was awaiting surgery.

During a visit, Leonard initially told Paul that he'd met the twins a number of times, but didn't know what had happened to them.

After a while, however, his memory seemed to return and he described a particular incident.

Leonard and his parents had visited Gilbert and Marie Rosenthal's house unexpectedly.

Marie was angered by the surprise visit.

When someone asked where the twins were, she told them they were upstairs sleeping.

One of the family members said they wanted to see the twins.

I'll bring them down, said Marie.

She headed upstairs, then reappeared with the twins.

She was grasping them by their wrists.

Marie descended the stairs with the twin dangling from each of her hands.

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Leonard said it was as though she was carrying chickens by their necks. After four steps down, Marie deliberately dropped both of the children. Then she stated, here are the twins. Leonard said that Jack jumped up and ran over to him. The little boy held on to Leonard tightly as though he was scared. When Paul asked what happened to Jill, Leonard shook his head and replied, I don't know. His description of this incident reminded Paul of something he'd heard from another relative who wished to remain anonymous. This person had heard that something bad had happened to the twins. One of them had been dropped and both had subsequently disappeared. This relative asked to Gilbert's mother once or twice what had happened to the twins. She would only say, we don't discuss that. Paul tried to piece together what might have happened to him and Jill based on the broken recollections he'd collected. It seemed that the household he was born into had been an unhappy and struggling one. Multiple witnesses told him that his mother, Marie Rosenthal, had found having so many young children difficult and drank frequently as a result. Marie had told one relative, quote, Every year I get pregnant and have another baby and I really don't like it. When they lost their home and Gilbert temporarily abandoned his family, Marie struggles intensified. For some reason, Jack and Jill had born the brunt of their parents' frustration and abuse. Some relatives believed, or were told, the children were intellectually disabled, which was not true. Paul thought it was interesting that Jack had a black eye when Susan babysat him. Remnants of a bruised eye were visible on his face when he was found outside McCrory's department store in July 1965. Once this meant he'd been abandoned just a few days after Susan had found the twins in an appalling state. However, the fact that Susan hadn't mentioned the Rosenthal's youngest child, Fred, meant that perhaps there were gaps or errors in her recollection of events. Fred had been around six months old when the twins disappeared, and yet Susan didn't remember him being present when she babysat. However, it's possible that the infant may have been staying with extended family on that night instead. Paul believed that a particularly horrible event must have preceded his parents abandoning him. Perhaps they had either deliberately or accidentally killed Jill and felt they had to get rid of her twin as well. Multiple relatives reported hearing that Jill had been dropped. One recalled that she had supposedly been sent to an institution. Most of them agreed that the subject of the twins was forbidden within the family. Paul wondered if Jill had been buried somewhere. In the first part of 1965, his family had lived with his paternal grandmother before

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moving into public housing.

His grandmother's property was now an empty lot.

A radar sweep of the lot indicated a disturbance in the soil, right at the point where the backyard began.

Paul obtained permission from the lot's owner to dig it up and get some help from a construction crew.

They cleared a hole that was six feet wide and deep.

Eventually, they found something.

A bone.

Ten more fragments followed.

Paul found an expert to examine the bones.

It turned out that all were animal bones and had most likely been used in making soup.

He was told that he had little hope of ever finding Jill's remains.

The bones of a child around two years old aren't yet fully formed and would have most likely disintegrated after such a long time.

Another aspect of the 50-year-old mystery remained unsolved.

Paul had learnt his own identity and origins, but the truth of what had happened to the real Paul Franzach after being kidnapped from Michael Race Hospital was still unknown.

The FBI had reopened the case after Paul went public with his story, but no news or developments had come from that.

Four more years passed.

Then one day, in January 2019, Paul received an email with the subject line, This is the baby you're looking for.

It was from an anonymous tipster.

They informed Paul that a 36-year-old woman from Michigan named Julie had uploaded her DNA to a genealogy database.

The database had matched Julie with a genetic relative who was also on the website.

Paul's brother, Dave Franzach.

It turned out that Dave was Julie's uncle on her father's side.

Her father was the real Paul Franzach.

This revelation was shocking to Julie and she hadn't told her father about it yet.

As far as he knew, he was Kevin Beatty and his mother was a woman named Lorraine Fountain.

Lorraine's parents had immigrated to the United States from Russia and Lithuania.

They decided to make Chicago their home and raised their family there.

Lorraine was born in 1921 and spent much of her life in Chicago and at the nearby state of Michigan.

Lorraine married at the age of 19 in 1940 and soon had two children, Norma Ray and Jo Bowers.

She divorced and remarried in 1951, but that relationship also failed.

In 1964, the year that Paul Franzach was born and kidnapped, Lorraine was back in her hometown of Chicago.

She was now in her early 40s and was dating a doctor.

All of a sudden, she abruptly left to live in Arkansas.

The South Central State was in a completely different part of the country to the Midwestern

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regions Lorraine had always resided previously.

Lorraine wasn't alone.

She had a baby boy with her who was named Kevin Beatty.

His surname wasn't explained, but Lorraine told everyone that Kevin was her son.

When he was about five years old, Lorraine took him back to Michigan where her other adult children lived.

Lorraine's daughter was surprised to see her mother with a small child and asked, Who's that kid?

Lorraine replied, That's your brother.

Kevin married a man named Robert Fountain and he became Kevin's stepfather.

Lorraine and Robert were both heavy drinkers and this seeped into Kevin's upbringing.

In high school, Kevin was shy but liked sports.

He played football and basketball, but for some reason Lorraine never attended his games.

According to those who knew them, Lorraine was an angry person and Kevin was afraid of her.

After graduating school, Kevin began working as a machinist.

He also married and had three daughters.

Kevin struggled with alcoholism over the years.

His mother often purchased alcohol for him when he was in junior high and as he grew older, his substance abuse increased.

This describes Kevin as a really sweet man when he was sober, but when he drank he was quote, a nightmare.

Kevin's drinking ultimately led to him and his wife divorcing.

Kevin's mother Lorraine died in 2004 at the age of 82.

There's no indication she ever gave Kevin any reason to believe that he wasn't biologically hers.

After Kevin's daughters found out the truth of his paternity, they were afraid to tell him.

They had not only discovered that his mother wasn't related to him, but that he was a famous kidnapping victim.

Several weeks after Paul had first heard from the tipster, Kevin's daughters had told him the truth and also informed the FBI.

Photos of Kevin as a teenager revealed a striking resemblance to his biological brother Dave.

They had the same smile, eyes and roundish face shape.

Even their hair was styled identically, parted so it swept over their foreheads.

There were other family similarities too.

Without realizing it, Kevin had inadvertently followed in the footsteps of his biological father by becoming a machinist like him.

Kevin's father Chester Franzach died in 2017, two years before Kevin's identity was discovered.

But his mother Dora Franzach was still alive.

She was excited to learn her kidnapped baby had finally been found and couldn't wait to meet him.

Then, three months later in April, Kevin was diagnosed with four brain tumors as well as lung and kidney cancer.

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He began chemotherapy treatment and was unable to travel.

In early 2020, Kevin was able to call Dora and have their first ever conversation.

They had another call shortly after that and Dora held out hope that she might still be able to meet her kidnapped son.

But on Saturday, April 25, 2020, one day before his 56th birthday, Kevin passed away.

Dora told Paul that she felt a new kind of grief upon finally learning what had happened to her kidnapped baby.

I'm glad that he was found, I'm glad we finally got an answer, but the thing that always used to make me feel better was the hope that whoever had him would be able to give him more than he would have gotten from us.

I prayed he'd been that fortunate, but from what I've learned, I don't feel like he's had many opportunities in his life.

I remember thinking, why would somebody kidnap him if they couldn't give him a really good life?

Although Paul had been found, questions about his kidnapping remained.

It still wasn't clear who was behind the kidnapping.

Was Lorraine Fountain solely responsible, or had she purchased, taken, or been given Kevin by whoever stole him?

Lorraine's mother had been a nurse's aide, leading to speculation that she could have obtained a nurse uniform that way.

However, her physical appearance didn't really match the kidnapers.

Witnesses at the time described the kidnapper as between 35 and 45 years old, about 5'5 inches tall and approximately 145 pounds.

She had a graying brown hair and a ruddy complexion.

Lorraine had been 42 at the time, putting her in the right age range.

But she had been much shorter, at just under 5 feet tall, and one acquaintance who'd known her as a young woman said she'd looked like country music star Dolly Parton.

A source close to Kevin said he'd been certain his mother wasn't his kidnapper.

The same source told Paul that the mafia had been behind Baby Paul Fronzac's abduction as part of a child kidnapping ring.

According to this source, Lorraine was acquainted with some mob bosses and had a role caring for these children until they were placed with new families.

All of the publicity around Paul's kidnapping led to the mafia struggling to sell him.

Lorraine eventually agreed to take him and raise him when he was 3 months old.

There is no evidence to support this claim.

After Kevin Beatty was identified as Paul Fronzac, special agents from the FBI started making calls and conducting interviews with witnesses.

The case remains open, but as of mid-2023, the identity of Paul Fronzac's kidnapper remains unknown.

The man who was raised as Paul Fronzac has kept his name, despite learning that he was originally Jack Rosenthal.

Paul's biggest question today is what happened to his twin sister Jill.

He believes it's possible that Jill was killed back in 1965, but also holds out hope that she is still alive.

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Perhaps Jack and Jill were both abandoned separately at the same time, and to Jill wound up with a new identity like he did.

Paul was unable to question his biological parents Gilbert and Marie about the mystery, as they had died in 1995 and 1997 respectively.

Both were killed by cancer and was 61 years old when they passed.

Paul has received messages from a number of women who believe they may be Jill Rosenthal, but so far DNA testing has failed to find her.

In March 2020, Paul filed a missing persons report for Jill with the Atlantic City Police Department.

He also commissioned an age-progressed composite sketch of what Jill might look like today.

No photographs of Jill as a baby existed, so the artist drew upon other photographs of the Rosenthal family, as well as Paul's own appearance.

Although he and Jill hadn't been identical twins, his former babysitter Susan Warlett had said they looked remarkably similar.

In September 2022, the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children published and circulated the image of Jill that Paul commissioned.

As of the release of this case file episode, the whereabouts of Jill Rosenthal remain unknown.

Paul's journey to discover the truth of his identity and what happened to the real Paul Franzach became something of an obsession for him over the years.

He says that his preoccupation with the case ultimately led to the breakdown of his marriage, but he felt obligated to resolve the mystery.

He has written two books about the case and his own investigations, titled *The Fountaling* and *True Identity*.

For as long as he can remember, Paul felt out of step with those around him.

As an adult, he found it hard to put down roots and would drift between jobs and relationships.

He partially credits this tendency to a genetic predisposition, as other members of the Rosenthal family had led similar lives.

But Paul mostly believes that his restlessness was due to lacking a sense of belonging.

In getting to know some of his biological relatives, Paul finally met family members who looked like him and shared his interests.

One of his cousins was a talented musician and shared Paul's passion for music.

But Paul's real sense of belonging came when his daughter was born.

Paul's commitment to solving his family's mysteries was also done for her, to give her more information about her own heritage and story.

And it was also done for the family who raised him.

Paul's investigation initially drove a wedge between him and his adoptive parents, who didn't want to dredge up the past.

But eventually, it allowed Paul to grow closer to them and discuss things that had been left unsaid for decades.

Paul interviewed his mother, Dora, for his second book.

During their conversation, she told him about the first moment she met him as a toddler in New Jersey.

Quote,

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The truth is, from that very moment, I never really doubted that you were my son. Over the years, I noticed the differences, but even then, I never questioned it. I loved you, and I was always proud of you. So why would I question it? You were the son that we raised, and that was that.