

English translation (please forgive our rough translation: TaKen UK)

HIS CASE IS NOT UNCOMMON ACROSS THE CHANNEL, WHERE IT REMOVES EACH YEAR, THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN FROM THEIR PARENTS. SOMETIMES WRONGLY. ALWAYS IN THE GREATEST SECRECY. OVERZEALOUS SERVICES SOCIAL OF HER MAJESTY? REPORT ON THE ISLAND OF LOST CHILDREN.

By Lise Martin / Photos Kalpesh Lathigra for Grazia

Grantham, East of England, beginning of September. They are gathered in small groups to the brick building entrance. Sometimes a sob interrupts discussion. Sometimes is a burst of voices, followed by an apologetic smile. All end their story with the same phrase: *"We need people to know."* These parents have come here for help: their children have been removed by social services without valid reason and have been adopted against their will. Since 2012, a handful of associations organize regular such gatherings to fight against these "forced adoptions" and that the Liberal Democrat MP John Hemming, who made this his hobbyhorse, does not hesitate to called "kidnapping by the State."

Precautionary principle to the extreme. A two-hour drive away in its permanence in Birmingham, this parliamentarian fumed : *"It is all the more shocking that everything is done in the secret."* According to him, a thousand children would, each year in England, be adopted after wrongly removed from their parents. In his bag: a series of stories scarcely credible yet supported a wealth of detail and thick files. Florence Bellone could not believe it either when she discovered this "scandal of stolen children," after being there a few years. This correspondent from RTBF has since spent three long years investigating. *"Services social are more or less zeal by county, she says. In some, I would advise against even young parents to come here ..."* and describes areas where the slightest scratch on behalf of a precautionary principle to the extreme, can trigger the machine. In the early 2000s, the system begun to seize children following the death of Victoria, 8, at the hands of her family, which repulsed the country. To better protect children in English, Tony Blair reformed the Children's Act, prompting counties make sales, and therefore social services to the zeal. In 2007, a new scandal baby "P", 17 months, dies in London from wounds inflicted by his mother and his stepfather, who were followed by social services. Five employees were laid off and booed by a public opinion in shock. *"Since all are terrified at the thought of missing a case"* says Jacque Courtnage from the association Taken. It's called the "Baby P effect". *"The number of placements in foster care has almost doubled since"* (6000 this year, with nearly 11,000 in 2012). The CAF/CASS, the equivalent of the DASS backs this up *"the fact that child abuse is more recognized and reported better than it has ever been"*. Associations are denouncing a climate bordering on hysteria with photos of children being mostly found on specialized sites for adoption (see box). The few journalists who have written on this subject agree. In 2008 already, the Times devoted a series of articles on *"the Secret state that steals our children"*. As the Daily Mail, which denounced this was "one of the biggest scandals of our time", citing broken families on the basis of *"charges too fragile."*

No English family is immune. This is what we are told by James (1), 32 years anonymously (parents do not have the right to speak if the judge issued an "order of gagging", which is often the case). It he took his little boy, born in October 2012, after a few weeks. *"Since his birth, he was in poor health. We ended up taking him to the hospital because he had a soft arm."* Verdict from Social workers: shaken baby. His wife had to live with her mother while James has the right to see his son one hour a week. But her relatives meantime consult a geneticist which has diagnosed him with his wife with a rare genetic condition: "Our son is too small so we can't test him, but there is a 99% chance we are carriers. That would explain all the symptoms!" James hopes to bring this to the High Court. But it is bitter: *"At no time did they seek any another avenue as they had in mind that I was abusing my son."* "This story is representative" sighs Jacque Courtnage. *"Every week I get at least 20 new cases"*. In her charming home in Nottingham, Jacque readily admits that some social workers do their job and a number of children are not safe in their family. *"But with experience, I know by the records and can identify those where there had been errors. They are legion"*. She herself has lost her two boys in 2008. They have since been adopted. But to avoid the risk of trouble, she prefers to evoke the struggle of her association: *"With my husband, we wanted to help other parents who have nowhere to go"*. According to her, no family is safe: a simple depression can justify withdrawal for "emotional risk." Sometimes it is concern of a mother for her newborn and is considered pathological and therefore risky for the children.

The European Court has been alerted

Fiona: she lost her daughter after a letter denunciation of her former employer social services in 2010: *"He told me he would take revenge because I had left. He wrote of the horrors of me, and they have me Emilie made overnight"*. Fiona has exhausted all remedies in vain, despite a judgment in which the court recognized that her daughter blossomed at her side, eventually leaving the country. She now lives in France, without Emilie. Her last hope? The United Nations: *"A member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child UN wrote this was the Minister of Education to say that the agreement had not been met in my case. It has still not been answered"*. Each family is struggling with their own wars. There is Stephanie, 29 years old with two boys removed "because of a bruise" it is claimed. *"I have nothing to lose"*, she says with an air of bravado. She has no right to use the names of her son, had them tattooed on her wrists, and covered her car in stickers denouncing forced adoptions: *"I want everyone to know what they did to me"*. These parents crazy pain are not the only challenge to the system. The latest blow came from within. In early September, Sir James Munby, recently appointed to President in family law, denounced the culture secrecy surrounding these cases: *"The public should be allowed to hear what parents say unhappy about the apparent deficiencies in the system"*. "The sling is organized on all fronts", trusts the lawyer Marie- Claire Sparrow hoping to convict Britain before the European Court of Human Rights, where it is going to present three cases. Florence Bellone, she believes that one day Britain will make a formal apology as Australia has done *"But in the meantime, how many families will unfairly be broken?"* •

(1) The name was changed

Adoption is a juicy business in England

"It's Tony Blair who made the child protection sector economic fledged" said Florence Bellone. By adopting its priorities, and giving premiums according to regions for the number of children, it has contributed to the emergence of dozens of specialized agencies. A flourishing business: Core Assets now operates in ten countries and NFA was sold last year 150 million an investment fund.....

The Cameron government on the same line, is preparing to vote on a bill to further accelerate the process of adoption. On sites like Be My Parent, pages boast even of the merits of small candidates, supporting photographs. The British Association for Adoption and Fostering justified this: *"We choose with the best care how to present them to maximize their chances of being adopted"*. Jacque Courtnage protested: *"Imagine that you lost your child without consent, and a few months later, you see their profile on a site as if it they were an animal abandoned at the RSPCA ..."*