

But I Have Rights Too!

by Ana Jones

Many parents in recent years have given up custody of their children or it was taken from them by the court. At that point, the adolescent is either sent to foster care or another member of the family. They will stay there for whatever amount of time the court has agreed on. This also means that there were many parents going to court to get their children back early or from a permanent situation because they were, in fact, their kids. I do not believe being the biological parent gives you the right to take back a child(ren) after giving them up for multiple years.

First of all, the child has now grown up in a completely different environment which would make it extremely difficult to readjust to a complete new life. In the case of Mika and his three older sisters (Karen M. Finello 1), after moving back in with their mother, their mental state had become extremely fragile and their behavior changed dramatically for the worst. This had also affected them mentally. Seven years ago, when custody of me and my sister was given to my aunt, I was a train wreck. It took me months to readjust to just living with my new family. It then took me years to be comfortable with people and even have friends, let alone be the spontaneous, outgoing person I am today. Fortunately, I eventually became "normal" and stayed with my family. If my biological mother took me away from this life at this point, my behavior would go backwards, and I probably would go to drastic measures to escape that unwanted life. In fact, about 25% of kids that are reunited with their biological parents are eventually brought back into foster care for reason such as this.

Another reason that it is a bad idea for biological parents to take back children that were given up or taken from them is because research shows that the way parents usually start or previously raised the child(ren) is almost always the way they would continue to raise them. In the cases of neglect, we must think about whether this was due to a lack of resources, a lack of understanding the child's needs, or was it due to personal problems with the parent like substance abuse. Also, have these conditions changed at all? If custody has been in the hands of someone else for a small amount of time, there usually won't have been any change at all in the parent's behavior. Even if it has been multiple years, if the issue with the parent was lack of knowledge, having the child back would not change that. Also, on average, most women who were separated from their children were not raised correctly themselves. They had no role models to learn from. They may not know how to cope with their parenting frustrations and may not be very willing to talk about it with other people. Many of the mothers who were separated from their children by law due to drugs, abuse, neglect, or mental illness usually are not prepared for usual parenting tasks.

On the other hand, many parents argue that because they gave birth to the child, they have a "special" connection or bond with them that nobody else can achieve. This however does not change the fact that, in most cases, it is not in the best interest of the child to be reunited with the parent. There would be no point for the child to rejoin the parent if they would be unhappy or be in a bad place. Also, just because you gave birth or produced the sperm, does not make you a suitable caretaker of the child. This only makes you the biological parental unit. Furthermore, owning custody of a human is not just something on a few pieces of paper, it is owning and raising and shaping a human being's future, their entire life would depend on you or you and your spouse.

In conclusion, I strongly believe that after giving up a child, you should not be able to take them back just because you are the parent. It would most likely cause much more damage to them than you would ever want. So, maybe next time you are angry with your parents or your kids, you should just think of how lucky you are to even have them in your life.