

RESPONSE TO SMH ARTICLE

The following was sent to the Sydney Morning Herald today by Robin Bowles, Ken Thompson's Media Contact.

I have just phoned to complain about the story by Joel Gibson in the SMH today headlined **Found, but will he be a little boy lost in the court system?**

This story shows the reporter made no attempt to check the sweeping comments made by Ms Freda Briggs in regard to the mother's attitude and the jurisdiction of the Family Court. No attempt appears to have been made by Gibson to check with Dutch or Australian consular authorities here or in Holland about whether Ms Briggs's suppositions/predictions are correct. In fact I can tell you from discussions I have had with Melinda Thompson's sister in law and her mother during which I was told that Melinda was very aware of the Hague Convention and its ramifications and had done quite a bit of research to ascertain which countries she might flee to that were NOT signatories to the Hague Convention, where she might be safe from having Andrew returned to his home and family. In addition I am aware of a phone call, made by Melinda Thompson to Ms Briggs, after her flight from Australia, which Ms Briggs received while in the company of another person, seeking advice about what steps Melinda might take to avoid being repatriated under the Hague Convention. I have been told that Ms Briggs has told Mr Thompson and Caroline Overington of The Australian Newspaper that there was a possibility that Japan might be a safe haven.

If Gibson had picked up a phone and contacted the Dutch authorities, the Attorney General's Department in Canberra, Ken Thompson, myself (as Ken's contact for the media), checked the findandrew website or done any proper journalistic research at all he would have found that Ms Briggs knew NOTHING about what is happening in Amsterdam.

It is articles like this, written as you told me, 'in a hurry' that give journalists the bad name some of them absolutely deserve. The whole article is crap. The carers DO speak Andrew's language, (which language anyway? he's been living overseas for two and a half years at pre-school, his grandmother told me, and school) Every second person (including police) speaks English in Holland.

And **"For a child to be subjected to such trauma can be devastating. The previous children have suffered from mental illness that the psychiatrists thought could be lifelong," Briggs says.**

Who brought this 'trauma' on Andrew? His mother, by taking him from all he knew and loved. By enrolling him in a school under a false name. By lying to him about his father. By trying to enlist the help of people like Ms Briggs, who gives her opinion **'Unfortunately the system in my experience'** without ANY knowledge of this particular situation except for the phone call and letter she received from Melinda, after Melinda abducted Ken's son. (The letter, by the way, ended up in the hands of the media and was extensively reported).

Finally I would like Mr Gibson to contact me for the real story, if he'd like to report facts instead of suppositions and speculations. My number is 0394156396 or 0418102732. If he's going to be a proper reporter when he grows up he should learn how to properly research a story that has such impact on the people he is writing about instead of writing it 'in a hurry'. Deadlines are not more important than the truth.

Robin Bowles