

| Keep — one-page takeaway

Records

- OBCs sealed in many states since the early-to-mid twentieth century; sealing began in Minnesota, 1917.
- Access varies by state: open/restored (Alaska, Kansas, Oregon, Maine, others), partial or mutual-consent, or effectively sealed. Check current status via adoptee rights organizations rather than assuming.
- State registries require both parties to register, so they produce relatively few matches.
- DNA testing has functionally routed around the records system since roughly 2015.
- International records vary by country and placement era; some are minimal or falsified.

Organizations

- American Adoption Congress; Bastard Nation; state-level adoptee rights groups. They lead records reform and maintain current landscape information.

Economics and the cultural conversation

- The paperwork of an adoption is also the record of a transaction. Some adoptees carry a felt debt attached to a dollar figure they've seen.
- Active debates: same-race vs transracial placement, the economics of private practice, adoptee access rights. You don't need a position; you need to know clients may be working through this history.

In the room

- A response to a long-sought document may not match the anticipation. Make room for whatever is or isn't there; don't supply the feeling.
- Structural material is clinical material. A client discovering their adoption's economics isn't being cynical.
- You don't have to become a legal resource. Know enough to recognize what the client is up against, and point them to the organizations that track it.

Continued considerations

- Do you know what your own state does with original birth certificates?
- What's your reaction to an adoptee who is angry at the institution of adoption, and what does that reaction tell you?
- Sit with this: what does it do to a person to need permission to know their own name?