

Christine Miskonoodinkwe Smith

a series by Seema Marwaha

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Photos by Seema Marwaha

I was taken from my birth mom when I was a year old. I am a Sixties Scoop child. There are thousands of us.

I was adopted with my biological sister. We were physically and emotionally abused. From a very young age, I was constantly being told I was a little bitch. That I wasn't going to amount to anything. That I was stupid. I went into foster care at age 10. It wasn't until my third foster home that I realized that the people taking me in actually cared. I experienced trauma and rejection and was in and out of the hospital for much of my 20s.

I put myself on the adoption birth registry to reconnect with my birth mom. I found out she lived in Winnipeg. She was from the Peguis reserve.

I remember the moment I saw her for the first time. I thought, "Oh my God, I look like somebody." It may seem trivial to people, but I finally had someone I could connect to. It was an overwhelming feeling. And it was overwhelming for my mom. She ended up in the hospital while I was visiting her. I remember my mom leaving the hospital. I had to do up her coat. And it was like the roles were reversed. I was being the mom and she was being the child.

I went out and saw her almost every year until she died. I lost her almost 3 years ago.

I want people to know that the Sixties Scoop is not something you can just get over. It impacts you in more ways than you can believe. We should all have a basic understanding of why it happened and be able to be reciprocal in helping Indigenous

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communities and individuals get through it. This would have changed the way I interacted with health care throughout my life. To most health care workers, I was a poor little Indian girl that was lost or feeling lost.

Christine Miskonoodinkwe Smith is a Sixties Scoop survivor and from Peguis First Nation.

