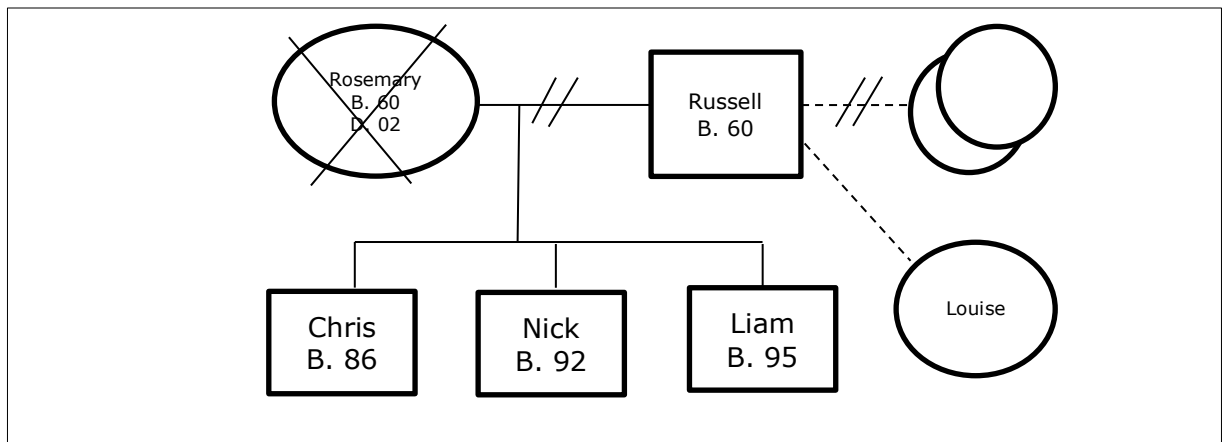


12 December 2014

To whom it may concern

I have offered to my son Nick to write down a few things that might help with medical assessment. I have previously met with Dr X, Clinical Psychologist, Moonee Ponds and provided information about Nick's childhood, and assume she has passed on any relevant information. So at the risk of repetition;

Nick is my middle son. I have two other sons; Chris (28) and Liam(19). Nick's mother Rosemary died in 2002, aged 42. Rosemary and I had divorced a few years earlier. Nick's grandparents are deceased. I have a brother and two sister, and Rosemary had 7 siblings.



Nick's birth was uncomplicated. He was a few days overdue so the doctor opted to induce birth. He had no significant health problems as a child, although experience mild asthma and required to use a preventer during school years. In grade one he was diagnosed with ADHD and prescribed Ritalin, which he took until his was about eleven. He stayed down a year in grade one. He experienced learning difficulties throughout school years, eg, organisation and focus, which was attributed to ADHD. He was enrolled in reading recovery during grade 3 and 4. The education psychology assessments identified no intellectual issue. When he was eleven an OT advised he utilise typing due to his struggling with handwriting.

Nick was agile and liked climbing as a child. However he struggled with organised sport. I latter enrolled him in gymnastics where he proved quite adaptive but found following complex instruction difficult. In Secondary school he attempted trapeses and proved able to master various catches. At Nick's request, he opted to attend art class as he enjoyed drawing, which is a passion he has maintained. He has a fascination with history and fantasy. Then again, so do I. And the history and visual art interest can be followed down the male lineage, including Nick's uncle, grandfather and great-grandfather.

With regard mental ill-health; my own father's family there is a history of depression. My father suicided at age 79. I was diagnosed with depression in my late 20s and remain under supervision of Dr Y, NorthPark Clinic. My son Chris has also been treated for depression. Rosemary experienced significant post-natal depression with each birth. However, a care plan had been developed with her pregnancy with Nick, and I've no impression of any issue with attachment or feeding.

As for Rosemary's death; she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2000. She undertook various medical treatments and surgery at Austin Hospital. While she left work (Special Care Nurse, Mercy Hospital) she was generally able to maintain care of our three children. We had separated in 1998. Nick and Liam stayed with me alternate weekends. My oldest son Chris and I had become estranged by this time. To described Rosemary and my relationship as strained would be an understatement. I can't offer much information about Nick during this period. He continued to struggle with reading at school, and was treated by teachers as a child experiencing ADHD. I gather that there were issues between Nick and his older brother Chris. I'm confident that Nick can talk about this himself. I has no feelings that Nick and his brother's had anything other than a warm and close relationship with their mother, and her declining health must have effected them. For myself, I experienced the normal issues around part time parenting; how to maintain consistency of care and warm environment in a state of low parental cooperation.

I would add that my parents maintained their own close relationship with Rosemary following our seperation. Apparently, my mother and one of Rosemary's younger brother's Damien where very attentive in supporting Rosemary and caring for the children. My own father's death followed Rosemary's within a few months. My sons had been quite close to their grandfather. They regularly visited my parents, spent time with my father in his art studio (it contained a model train-set), and family feast days. My father took them on regular excursions, which only ended with his declining mental health.

With regard the maternal family, I recommend you contact Kathy, Rosemary's maternal sister. I don't feel I can be objective. I can offer that Rosemary had close involvement with her family and Nick had regularly contact with his maternal family when Rosemary was alive, especially His uncle Damien and aunt Kathy. Nick's maternal grandparents had died before Nick was born.

Following Rosemary's death, Nick and his brother Liam came to reside with myself and then partner Judi and her daughter. Chris went to reside with his maternal aunt Kathy. While Judi and I were together for over 10 years, the step-family situation was a strain. I am confident Nick can express himself well about this period. I'd only add there had been no planning about the children's care in the advent of Rosemary's death. I guess I was in denial as to what was happening. I feel Judi tried her best and was very kind to the boys when they most needed it. While I have had a number of relationships since, I haven't sought to share a home with anyone.

Finally, Nick left my home about 3 years ago. We had been in conflict over his attitude to schooling. He went to live with his maternal uncle and then with his brother, Chris. I feel Chris and Nick experience issues sharing a home. Although, they seemed to be mostly quite congenial. We had had an arrangement where Nick would regularly stay with me as a form of respite. However, the most recent dispute had resulted in Nick leaving and coming to stay with me. I'm sure Nick can well explain the circumstances. I can only add that I feel it is more the complexities of the sibling relationship, and less any specific incident. I had advised Chris that he maybe better residing on his own, with perhaps a housemate to offset his mortgage. Chris and his younger brother Liam have chosen to share instead. Liam had been residing with a friend of mine since I went to work in the Pilbara in 2011, for a year and he opted to remain in Melbourne. When I returned he decided to remain with my friend. If I tried to draw a genogram of the family it would contain a series of overlapping rings. However, for Nick and his brother's lives we continue to at least all spend Christmas morning all together before disbursing to other locations for the day. I'm not sure what that says. Two of my favourite quotes come from Richard Condon's *The Manchurian Candidate* (1958). I also like this quote from *Breakfast at Tiffany's*.

*“Human fish, swimming at the bottom of the great ocean of atmosphere, develop psychic injuries as they collide with one another. Most mortal of all are those gotten from the parent fish.”*  
*Psychiatrist*

*“Twelve days of Christmas! One day of Christmas is loathsome enough!”*  
*Raymond Shaw*

*Holly Golightly: I'll tell you one thing, Fred, darling... I'd marry you for your money in a minute. Would you marry me for my money?*  
*Paul Varjak: In a minute.*  
*Holly Golightly: I guess it's pretty lucky neither of us is rich, huh?*  
*Paul Varjak: Yeah.*

Perhaps that best illustrates the family that Nick has grown up in.

Yours sincerely