

### „Living in Brabant and still an outsider”

**Luís Carlos Vogels (25):** „It can be heard from my accent that I was raised in Brabant. However, as a person from Brabant I a man outsider, and I don't mean it as in the colour of my skin. I was born in Colombia. When I was 3 years old me and my sister were adopted. My history as an adoptee is tumultuous. My adoption parents did not always treat me well, and that is said in a nice way. People from Brabant aren't very direct which I was very much. That causes a lot of fights in which I had a rough time. I was not the way my parents thought I should be: like them. They were modest, I was temperamental. When I was eight I went to youth care. Until my sixteenth year I went to several authorities, later on I went to live with my uncle and aunt. At school I was seen as an individual who would always wanted to be in the spotlight. A macho. Only after I was back in Colombia I learned to understand my own behaviour. Colombia is one big macho culture.

In the Netherlands I had problems with the amicable way I treated women. Latinos just happen to cuddle more than Dutch people. That is what my girlfriend says too – 100% Dutch with blonde hair and blue eyes – whom I live together with in Leerdam. Though she has no problems with this. I am chemical laboratory worker, but unemployed at the moment. I clearly have problems in keeping a job. A boss of mine blamed me with a Mediterranean mentality: take it easy, no stress, tomorrow is another day. I did do my best and tried finishing my work but sometimes I just couldn't make it. In the meanwhile I returned to Colombia for a second time, though I haven't found my biological parents. My adoption parents said they brought me to the Netherlands because my real parents couldn't take care of me. After hearing some stories I came to the conclusion that they could. It's quite a shock when you find out. Furthermore, I am very positive and do not see myself as a victim at all. I am not happy with my adoption, but I am a happy person.”

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Luís Carlos Vogels.

### „I am not an angry adoption child”

**Marcia Engel (31):** „In Colombia where I was born, my name was Marta ha, but when I became two and-a-half years old and a couple from Het Gooi adopted me my name had been changed to Marcia. After a while I heard it from my aunt that I cried a lot and had lots of nightmares. For my adoption parents this was the most beautiful time of their lives, it was like the birth of a child, but to me my first time in the Netherlands must have been traumatic. My problems included small things at first. Lots of adopted children eat rapidly as in without chewing. It's a form of survival. When your parents

don't know that it's actually normal, it's seen as undesirable behaviour. That doesn't have a positive outcome. It didn't take a second for me to think: there is something wrong with me, I am crazy. I always wanted to go to my room. When you're in puberty you want to do that anyway, but I could not handle family situations altogether, it was extremely hard for me. I felt like an "alien". Only after I was eleven my mother told me I did not come from her belly. The ground beneath my feet started to tremble and disappear. This caused a lot of emotional problems. I lied about everything and was rebellious. After my parents' divorce I ended up in a crisis shelter, but no one there knew how to deal with an adopted child. Afterwards I was taken in by a foster family with more adoptees. Luckily they knew how to deal with the situation. If you don't know where you're from you can't look towards the future. This is the basic problem of a lot of adopted children. For a long time I have wandered through life without a purpose. Only after I found my biological parents in Colombia I was able to start discovering my identity. Someone who made a business out of it traced them for me. My adoption papers were false. My date of birth is 1 January but that is not right. Also it says: parents unknown. But the minute you pay for it, all of a sudden they are retraceable. My biological parents never signed up for my adoption.

Better yet: my father has searched for me for a long time, but when he arrived at the orphanage I was supposed to be all he heard was: you're too late, she's already gone. Just like lots of other adopted children I was mad for a long time about the way things happened, though I have no grudge against anyone. When I found out the puzzle I realized how unique I really was. Fate clearly wanted me to be here. I don't want to go through life like a sad person but I want to be successful.

Together with my husband I have been living in Amsterdam for ten years now. We have two sons and it's going well. I can see my own reflection in my children. At home and at my job at a collection agency my fierce temper might play a role in situations of conflicts, though I have learned to hold back. I still keep in touch with my adoption father in a good way. He returned to his opinion. Now he says: "I did not know what kind of problems adoption could cause for a child. Back then I did what I thought was best."



Marcia Engel.