

She can't stand to watch. "If he dies in his next placement his blood is on your hands," she tells police.

She's a young adult now, safe in the knowledge they can't take her. A younger sister, Milly*, who has suffered significant attachment issues since her earliest days, is staying put in her bedroom. Tom and Marie, a non-Indigenous couple who work in education and health, say the teen is in constant fear she too will be taken away.

"To know that's happened to her brother, and it could be her next, and to see him so traumatised is horrendous. It's wrong on every level," Marie says.

They watch this drama, this struggle between three police and a boy unfolding outside their house, in disbelief. After all they've heard about trauma-informed care, this is deemed the best way to handle a child who requires extra care with his diagnoses of foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, intermittent explosive disorder and ADHD?

Whatever gripes Territory Families have with this couple – and there are many, on both sides – this video of forced removal of an Indigenous child by police looks like something from the dark past.

You watch it and can't help but wonder how the best interests of a vulnerable boy who has done nothing wrong are best served in the cage of a police wagon.



Tom and Marie are still shaken when they speak with *The Australian* in the aftermath of his removal.

NT Police refused to comment on the case when contacted by *The Australian* on Monday. A spokesperson for Territory Families would only say that the safety and wellbeing of children and families is their "utmost priority".

"Child protection work is extremely complex and is done with (a) range of partners from police, health, and non-government organisations. This work is regularly reviewed to ensure the actions were appropriate and in the best interests of the child."

There have been no allegations that Benny was unsafe with Tom or Marie, or lacked love and care or was denied cultural connection. They have close bonds with the children's birth family. Two grandparents and an aunt told *The Australian* earlier this year they were content for the children