

# Finding a Missing Father on a Vintage TV Show

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In an era when millions of people are searching for their “roots” and many are learning about long-lost – or previously unknown – relations, one New Jersey man’s experience qualifies as perhaps the strangest family discovery story ever.

In the new memoir “Please Stand Up” writer Keith Mason recounts the night in 2016 when, at the age of 64, he first saw his father, a man he’d never known – on a YouTube of the classic TV quiz show “To Tell the Truth” from 55 years before.

After that emotionally wrenching night, Mason delved into his father’s controversial biography as a deep-sea salvage diver raiding sunken German U-boats, with a resumé of petty crimes, unpaid debts and shaky business propositions. Besides Mason’s mother, the missing man married seven times (twice to the same woman) and produced eight brothers and sisters the writer never knew about. One was an honored homicide detective in Ohio, while another brother lived an hour’s drive away from Mason’s home outside Philadelphia.

Then came the details about his unknown grandfather, a crime-busting California reporter who ended up in a dusty Texas town called Alice. He was killed in the street in 1949 by a corrupt sheriff after the elder Mason identified the cop as the owner of a shady bar (as well as a stooge for a local power broker who was involved with an infamous voting conspiracy that put the future president Lyndon Johnson into the Senate).

The author found himself in a race against the clock to meet an older brother as health issues threatened to separate them for good. Meanwhile, he had another confrontation with his father, in a totally unexpected way, as he dealt with evolving emotions about the man who deserted him before he was born.

“Please Stand Up” follows three generations of men and their families as they pass through eccentric chapters of the American parade.

“Of all the needles in the internet haystack, I managed to stumble across this singular link,” Mason described. “People are using genealogy websites and spitting their DNA into tubes to see where they came from and who they’re related to. I found my father on an old TV show, what are the odds? And then to learn my father wasn’t a regular guy, but rather a notorious adventurer who deprived and abused his kids. Also, I turned out to be just like my grandfather, a reporter and public relations man. His killing was national news for months, so I hope our fates won’t also be similar.”

Keith Mason was widely published as a music and arts critic in Philadelphia before entering a nearly forty-year career in nonprofit public relations, nonprofit development and the performing arts. He also was a producer for one of Philadelphia’s most cutting-edge theaters, and worked in radio and voiceovers for years.

“Please Stand Up” is set for release in early 2022 through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, bookstores and many other sources, including the website [www.pleasestandupmason.com](http://www.pleasestandupmason.com)

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