

1  
2 IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEVADA

3 IN THE MATTER OF PARENTAL  
4 RIGHTS AS TO S.L., N.R.B., H.R.B.,  
5 AND W.C.B.

Supreme Court No. 71889  
Electronically Filed  
Jul 06 2017 02:11 p.m.  
Elizabeth A. Brown  
Clerk of Supreme Court

6  
7 DONALD B. and MELISSA L.,

8 APPELLANTS,

9 vs.

10 THE STATE OF NEVADA/ CLARK  
11 COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY  
SERVICES

12 RESPONDENTS.  
13  
14  
15

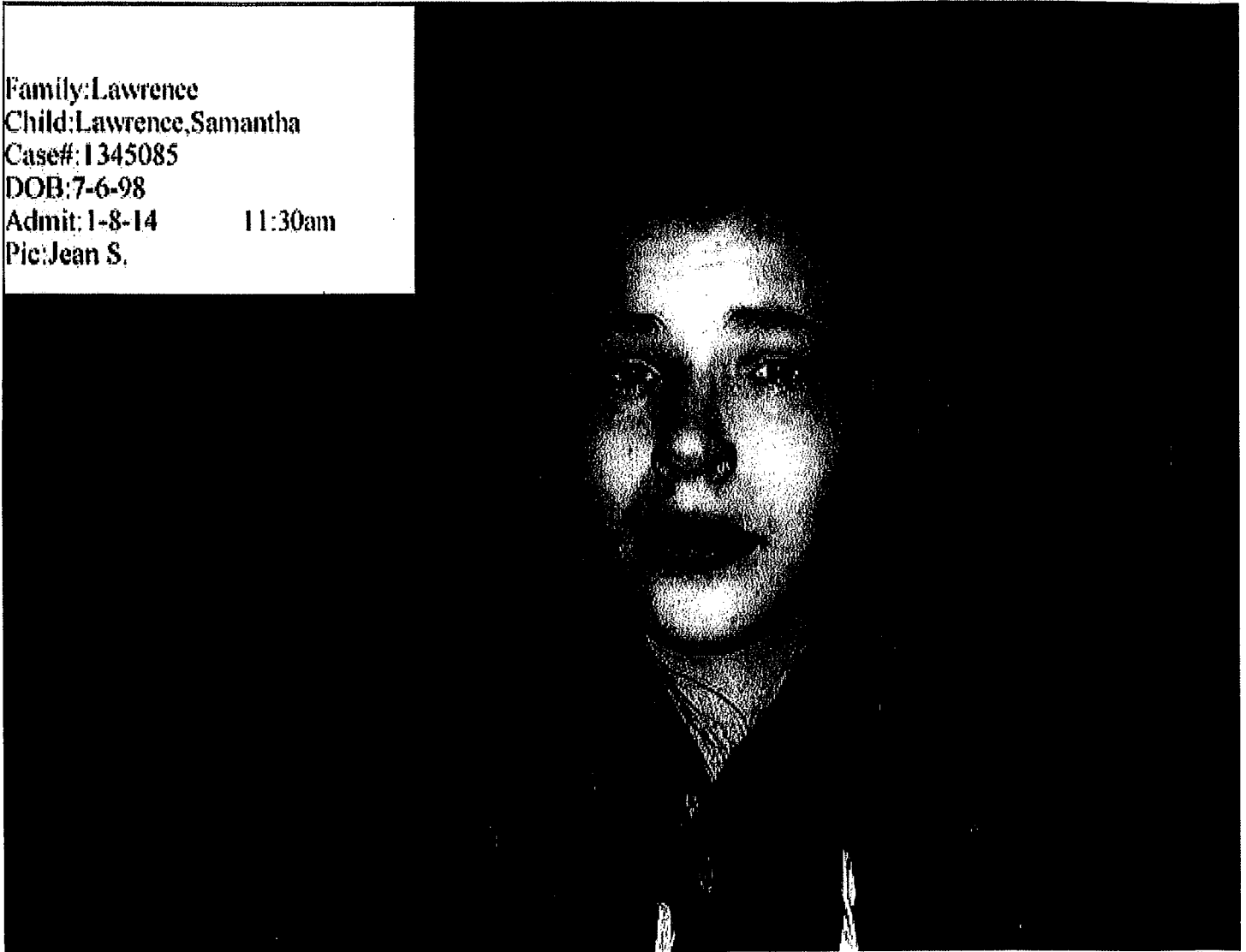
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19 **RESPONDENT'S APPENDIX**

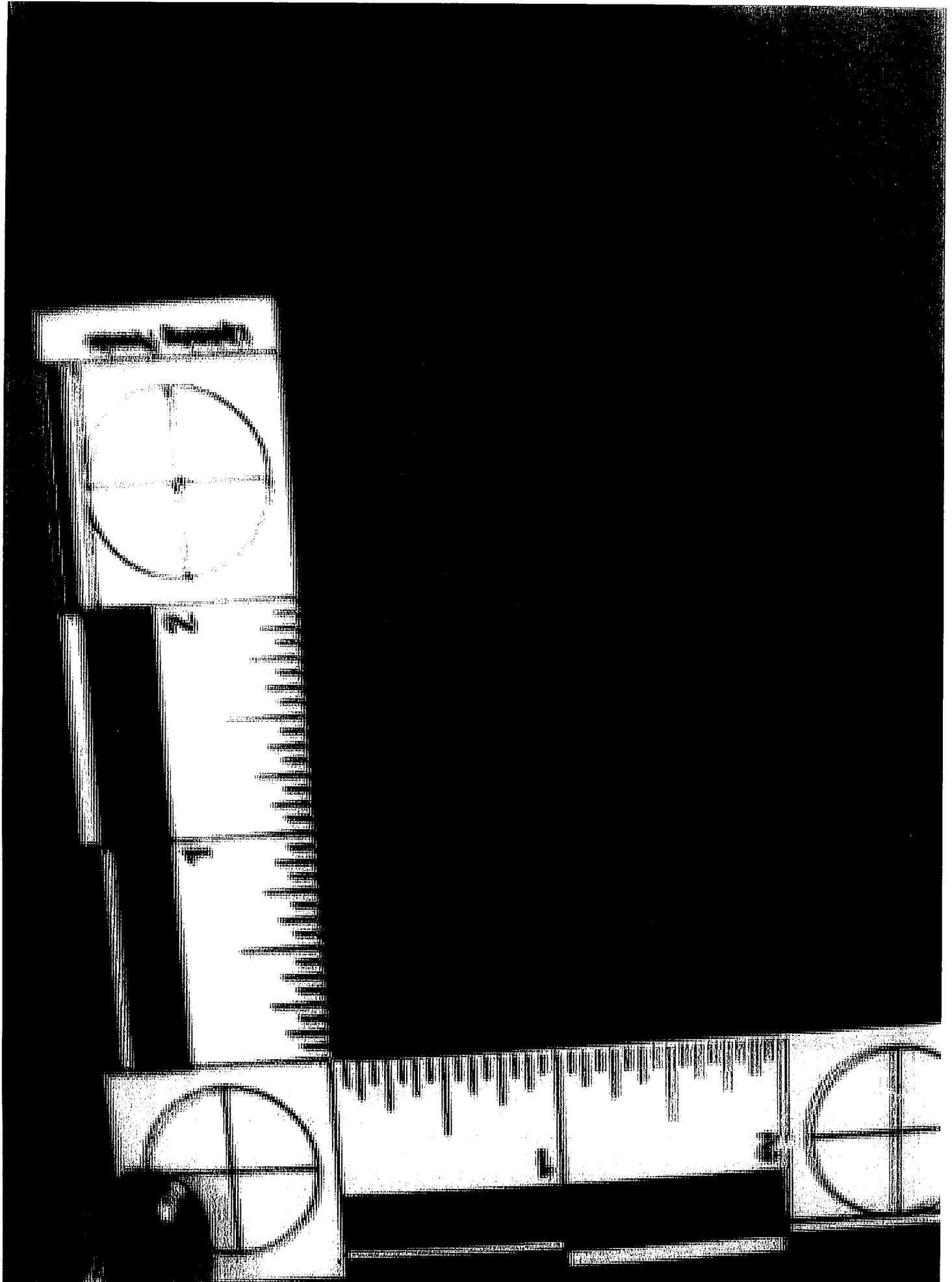
20  
21 STEVEN WOLFSON  
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22 Nevada Bar No. 1565  
Janne Hanrahan  
23 Chief Deputy District Attorney  
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24 601 North Pecos Road  
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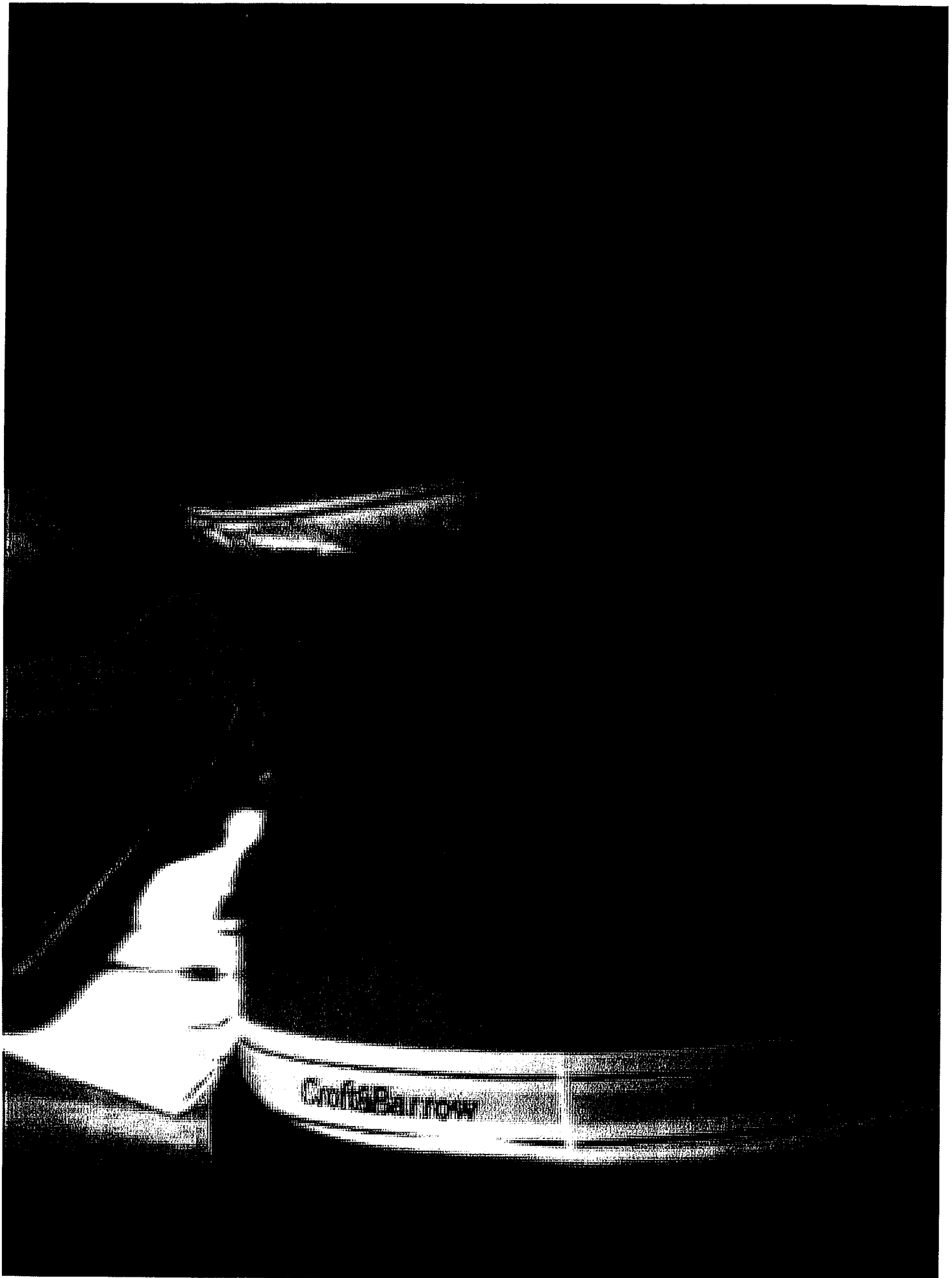
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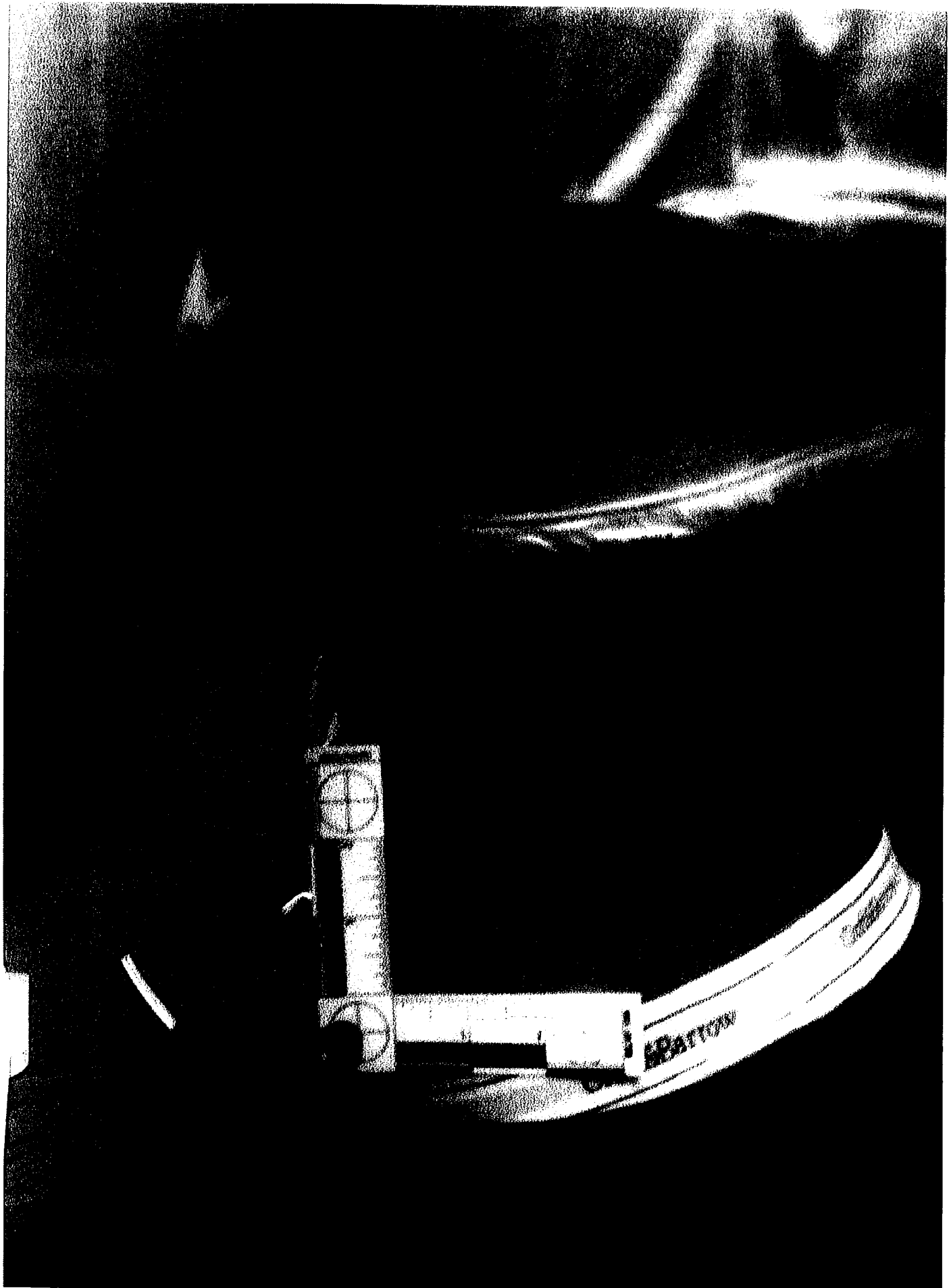
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Family:Lawrence  
Child:Lawrence,Samantha  
Case#:1345085  
DOB:7-6-98  
Admit:1-8-14 11:30am  
Pic:Jean S.





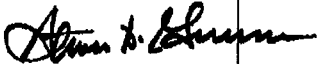






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CLERK OF THE COURT

7 **EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT**  
8 **FAMILY DIVISION - JUVENILE**  
9 **CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA**

9 In the Matter of:

10 SAMANTHA LAWRENCE

Date of Birth: 07-06-1998

11 A Minor, 16 Years and 01 Month(s) of Age

COURT CASE NO.: J-14-319202-P2

DEPT. : FAMILY JUVENILE

12 HEIDI BROWN

13 Date of Birth: 01-04-2004

14 A Minor 10 years, 07 Months of Age

15 NIKKII BROWN

16 Date of Birth: 01-04-2004

A Minor 10 years, 07 Months of Age

17 WYATT BROWN

18 Date of Birth: 05-30-2009

19 A Minor 05 years, 02 Months of Age

20  
21 **DISPOSITION REPORT**

22 Date of Hearing: 08-13-2014

23 Time of Hearing: 02:00 PM

24 Courtroom: JUDGE GIULIANI - #22

25 Attachment: N/A

26 **CONCERNING:**

27 Father: DONALD BROWN (of HEIDI, NIKKI and WYATT)

28 DOB: 03-09-1963

Address: 2127 BLUE ZENITH DRIVE  
LAS VEGAS, NV 89119



1 Mother: MELISSA LAWRENCE  
2 DOB: 08-07-1980  
3 Address: 2129 BLUE ZENITH DRIVE  
LAS VEGAS, NV 89119

4 Siblings: SAMANTHA, HEIDI, NIKKI and WYATT are all placed together at St.  
5 Jude's. The children have a paternal half sibling, David Brown, who is an adult that  
6 resides in California.

7 **REASON FOR DISPOSITION HEARING:**

8 This matter comes before the Court for a Report and Disposition Hearing on charges of  
9 abuse/neglect. The Honorable Hearing Master Femiano presided over the Plea Hearing  
10 held on January 29, 2014, at which Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown were present with their  
11 privately retained counsel, Donn Prokopious. Mr. Prokopious entered a denial on behalf  
12 of both parents. The Children's Attorney's Project (CAP) was assigned to the children.  
13 Janice Wolf was present on behalf of CAP to advise that assignment would be pending.  
14 Amy Honodel was then assigned to SAMANTHA. Later, Michelle Hauser was assigned to  
15 HEIDI, NIKKI and WYATT. The matter was set for trial for February 28, 2014, March 28,  
16 2014 and April 3, 2014. The matter was repeatedly continued due to multiple issues  
17 including the status of the criminal matter and the motion by CAP regarding whether  
18 SAMANTHA was a party to the case and would be present for the duration of the trial.  
19 That motion was later denied and SAMANTHA was not permitted to be in the courtroom  
to hear all testimony. Later, there was a motion for SAMANTHA to testify in the alternative  
placed on calendar by the District Attorney at the recommendation of SAMANTHA's  
therapist. The trial was set for a firm trial date of July 30, 2014. On that date, the trial  
proceeded in front of Justice Becker. After the state began with its case and a short  
recess, the parents returned and changed their plea to a No Contest plea to an Amended  
Petition number 2. The Dispositional Hearing was set for August 13, 2014. Please be  
advised that the Amended Petition 2 has not yet been filed as of the writing of this report.  
It was agreed that as the children were removed in January 2014, this Dispositional  
Hearing would also be considered the six month foster care review as well.

20 The Petition No. 2 - Amended in this matter cited:

- 21 (a) The mother is MELISSA LAWRENCE; the father to Samantha is UNKNOWN; the  
22 father to Nikki, Heidi and Wyatt is DONALD BROWN;  
23 (b) The subject minors resided with MELISSA LAWRENCE and DONALD BROWN at  
24 the time of the alleged abuse or neglect, and both are persons responsible for the welfare  
25 of the subject minors and regularly found in the home pursuant to NRS 432B.130;  
26 (c) In December 2013, the subject minor Samantha was found to have injuries that  
27 were characterized as "definite abuse" by a physician specializing in child abuse; the  
28 injuries included bruising and/or abrasions and/or loop marks and/or linear marks of  
differing ages to her back; the injuries were such that they could not have occurred  
without a deliberate but unreasonable act or failure to act by the person or persons  
responsible for the subject minor's welfare; see NRS 432B.450;  
(d) In December 2013, DONALD BROWN physically abused the subject minor  
Samantha by hitting and/or striking and/or beating her with a belt and/or other object  
and/or his hands, resulting in the injuries described above;

- (e) Over the course of the past six years, CPS was called to the home on multiple occasions as a result of reports of injuries to Samantha.
- (f) DONALD BROWN mentally injured the subject minor Samantha by causing her to experience extreme fear, anxiety and emotional distress related to the ongoing physical abuse;
- (g) MELISSA LAWRENCE failed to protect Samantha despite her knowledge of the ongoing physical abuse by DONALD BROWN;
- (h) MELISSA LAWRENCE mentally injured the subject minor Samantha by failing to obtain counseling and/or therapy for her to address the severe emotional distress caused by the ongoing physical abuse by DONALD BROWN;
- (i) The subject minors Heidi, Nikki and Wyatt are deemed to be unsafe in the home due to the ongoing abuse of Samantha pursuant to NRS 432B.330(1)(c).
- (j) DONALD BROWN is presumed to be an unfit caregiver for the subject minors pursuant to NRS 432B.555; DONALD BROWN was convicted of felony manslaughter and Corporal Punishment of a Child in relation to the death of his infant child in the 1980s;
- (k) The subject minors are in need of protection in accordance with NRS 432B.330 as a result of the abuse/neglect described above.

**WHEREABOUTS OF MINOR:**

Child(ren):	Facility	Number of Days in Placement
SAMANTHA LAWRENCE	St. Jude's Ranch	Since 5-2-2014
HEIDI BROWN	St. Jude's Ranch	Since 5-2-2014
NIKKI BROWN	St. Jude's Ranch	Since 5-2-2014
WYATT BROWN	St. Jude's Ranch	Since 5-2-2014

**PLACEMENT HISTORY:**

SAMANTHA was removed on January 8, 2014 and placed into foster care. Her siblings, HEIDI, NIKKI and WYATT were later removed on January 19, 2014 and placed into another foster home. A foster home could not be located to place the children together. The paternal uncle was reviewed as a placement and was denied. Additionally a fictive kin placement was reviewed and denied due to history and concern for protective capacity. The children's adult sibling's wife, Alyshia Brown, came to Las Vegas and moved into Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown's home and the parents moved out to allow for the children to be placed with her. The children were placed with Alyshia Brown from February 11, 2014 through April 4, 2014. The Department began to have concern for Ms. Brown's protective capacity. The placement then disrupted with Ms. Brown advising she was going to leave the state again. The children were taken to Child Haven pending foster care placement. Separate placements were identified for the children in order to place them off of the Child Haven Campus. Ongoing efforts were made to identify a home to take all of the children together. On May 2, 2014, the children were placed together at St. Jude's Ranch into the same cottage. This is the placement where they remain today.

	Child(ren)	Removal/ Placement Reason	Start Date	Release Date	Facility
1	SAMANTHA LAWRENCE	Abuse/Re moval from parents	1-8-2014	2-12-2014	Foster home
2		Placement with relative	2-12-2014	4-4-2014	Relative placement
3		Disrupted relative placement	4-4-2014	4-10-2014	Child Haven
4		Foster home located	4-10-2014	5-2-2014	Foster home
5		Placement with siblings	5-2-2014	Present	St. Jude's
6	HEIDI BROWN	Removal from parents	1-19-2014	2-12-2014	Foster home
7		Placement with relative	2-12-2014	4-4-2014	Relative placement
8		Disrupted relative placement	4-4-2014	4-13-2014	Child Haven
9		Foster home located	4-13-2014	5-2-2014	Foster home
10		Placement with siblings	5-2-2014	Present	St. Jude's
11	NIKKI BROWN	Removal from parents	1-19-2014	2-12-2014	Foster home
12		Placement	2-12-2014	4-4-2014	Relative

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WYATT BROWN

with relative			placement
Disrupted relative placement	4-4-2014	4-13-2014	Child Haven
Foster home located	4-13-2014	5-2-2014	Foster home
Placement with siblings	5-2-2014	Present	St. Jude's
Removal from parents	1-19-2014	2-12-2014	Foster home
Placement with relative	2-12-2014	4-4-2014	Relative placement
Disrupted relative placement	4-4-2014	4-29-2014	Child Haven
Placement with siblings	4-29-2014	Present	St. Jude's

**WHO IS IN THE HOME?**

Prior to the removal, the family was an intact family including Ms. Lawrence, Mr. Brown and all four children. It is reported that Alyshia Brown frequented the home, although this has not been confirmed. Mr. Brown is the father to HEIDI, NIKKI and WYATT. Mr. Brown has been the father figure in SAMANTHA's life, but is not married to Ms. Lawrence and is not SAMANTHA's biological father.

**Client**

**Case Role**

Melissa Lawrence	Mother
Donald Brown	Father of HEIDI, NIKKI and WYATT
SAMANTHA LAWRENCE	Child
HEIDI BROWN	Child
NIKKI BROWN	Child
WYATT BROWN	Child

**SCHOOL:**

Schools listed are as of this fall for the 2014-2015 school year.

Childs Name: SAMANTHA LAWRENCE

Grade:  
11TH

School: BOULDER CITY HIGH SCHOOL

Special Educational Needs: None

Grade: 6TH

Childs Name: HEIDI BROWN

School: Garrett Middle School

Special Educational Needs: None

Grade:  
6TH

Childs Name: NIKKI BROWN

School: Garrett Middle School

Special Educational Needs: None

Childs Name: WYATT BROWN

Grade: KIND

School: To be determined

Special Educational Needs: None

**SIBLING CONTACT:**

☒ Placed Together – The children have an adult paternal half sibling, David Brown, who resides in California. Mr. Brown has not had any contact with the children since their placement at St. Jude's. His wife, Alyshia, has contacted the Department; however Mr. Brown has not contacted the Department to be assessed for appropriate contact.

☐ Not Placed Together--

**PREVENTION/REUNIFICATION EFFORTS AND SERVICES:**

1. Ms. Lawrence was referred to Red Rock Psychological for Non Offending Parenting Classes.

2. Ms. Lawrence has been referred to the Parenting Project for parenting classes.

3. Mr. Brown has been referred to Red Rock Psychological for Physical Abuse classes.

4. Mr. Brown has been referred to parenting classes at the Parenting Project.

5. Visitation was initially arranged for Ms. Lawrence.

6. Phone visitation was initially arranged for Mr. Brown.

7. The children were placed in their physical home with a relative, Alyshia Brown.

8. The paternal uncle was assessed as a relative placement.

9. The Luisi's were assessed as a fictive kin placement.

10. The maternal grandmother was assessed as a placement and for appropriateness for contact with the children.

11. Personal belongings have been requested for the children.

12. SAMANTHA, HEIDI, NIKKI and WYATT have been referred to therapy through

1 Healthy Minds.

2 13. The Department has attended the criminal court hearings.

3 14. The children were placed together as a sibling group at St. Jude's campus.

4 15. Contact has been maintained with Mr. Brown and Ms. Lawrence regarding services.

5 16. Contact has been held with the children's sister-in-law regarding contact.

6 17. Contact has been held with the maternal grandfather regarding contact.

7 18. Contact has been held with the paternal grandmother regarding contact.

8 19. Permission was requested for the children to travel to California.

9 20. Treatment team meetings were held for the children.

10 Is the children listed in report currently on any psychotropic medication?

11 No

12 Has a Court appointed a person to be legally responsible for the children's psychiatric  
13 services?

14 No - A referral was made to the District Attorney to appoint the Nurse Case  
15 Manager as Person Legally Responsible (PLR) for SAMANTHA, HEIDI and NIKKI in May  
16 2014. None of the children are on medication on this time; however the Department  
17 believes that ongoing psychiatric assessments may be necessary. As there is a no  
18 contact order in place, the Department would request that the Nurse Case Manager be  
19 appointed for the children.

20 When was the children's last appointment? Not Applicable

21 When will the children have an appointment? Not Applicable

22 **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

23 Currently, there is a No Contact order that was issued out of the criminal court  
24 proceedings as to Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown. Prior to the No Contact order being in  
25 place, the Department supervised contact between Mr. Brown and the children  
26 telephonically. There are concerns about the extremely negative beliefs and statements  
27 that Ms. Lawrence makes, specifically regarding SAMANTHA. These demonstrate a lack  
28 of protective capacity and could further exacerbate emotional distress for SAMANTHA.  
Ms. Lawrence has openly stated that she believes that the younger children, specifically  
HEIDI, hate SAMANTHA. There is concern that contact with the parents, once  
unrestricted by the criminal court, should take place in a therapeutic context to ensure  
that no further damage is done to the sibling bond and to ensure that SAMANTHA's  
emotional well-being is protected. This will also serve to prevent anyone from attempting  
to engage SAMANTHA in recanting her disclosure or encouraging the other children's  
testimony in the criminal court matter. The therapist will then be able to decide when the  
children are ready each independently, and as a whole to have contact with their parents.

The Department has had significant contact with friends and family members of the  
children and parents regarding contact with the children. There has been a great deal of

1 concern for the intentions of each party in contacting the children and their beliefs and  
2 behaviors. The children have been in therapy at Healthy Minds and the therapists have  
3 been consulted about the decision making regarding timing of contact with relatives and  
appropriateness.

4 The maternal grandmother met with the Department of Family Services in March 2014  
and became very upset during this interaction. The maternal grandmother stated that she  
5 believed that SAMANTHA was a "problem child" and had inflicted the injuries upon  
herself. The maternal grandmother demonstrated no concern for her grandchildren in this  
6 interaction, but rather for Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown. The maternal grandmother had  
contact with the Department again in July 2014. During this interaction again, the  
7 maternal grandmother insisted that SAMANTHA was a difficult child, had injured herself  
and stated that CPS was trying to "send two innocent people to prison." When Supervisor  
8 Richardson attempted to engage with the maternal grandmother that SAMANTHA had no  
9 significant behaviors in the six months in care and no episodes of self-harm or  
aggression, the maternal grandmother continued to state that she cared only to ensure  
10 that everyone "knew the truth." Supervisor Richardson attempted to discuss protective  
capacity, that SAMANTHA was a child and that her emotional well-being was paramount.  
11 At this time, the Department cannot recommend that visitation with the maternal  
12 grandmother begin.

13 The paternal grandmother was spoken to early on in the case. She also indicated that  
she believed that SAMANTHA was a "bad child" based on what Ms. Lawrence and Mr.  
14 Brown had told her. The paternal grandmother advised that she did not want any contact  
15 with SAMANTHA, only with HEIDI, NIKKI and WYATT. When asked if she could keep her  
opinions to herself, she was not able to assure that this was the case.

16  
17 Alyshia Brown, the sister-in-law to the children, has had a couple of contacts with the  
Department regarding contact since the disruption in placement. When it has been  
18 discussed that the therapist has advised that the current timing is not good, Ms. Brown  
has then later called the foster home and demanded to speak to the children stating that  
19 the Department has given permission when she is aware that this was not the case.

20  
21 The parents have close personal friends, Paul and Antoinette Luisi, who requested  
placement at the beginning of the case; however they were denied due to background  
22 and concern for protective capacity. In May 2014, Mr. Luisi appeared at the St. Jude's  
cottage, was taking pictures of the cottage, came in the front door and spoke to the foster  
23 father. Ms. Luisi began to call the cottage incessantly and demanded the foster mother  
meet her with the children to exchange letters for Ms. Lawrence despite the no contact  
24 order in criminal court. Supervisor Richardson spoke to Ms. Luisi and advised them that  
their behavior was harassing in nature and concerning. Ms. Luisi's behavior continued. St.  
25 Jude's filed a police report with the Boulder City Police Department regarding the  
26 harassing behavior.

27 A former teacher of HEIDI and NIKKI came to their school in May 2014 and waited  
28 outside for them prior to the school day beginning. They were given letters from their  
classmates, which also included the phone number for the teacher asking the children to  
call.

1 The above two referenced incidents took place right after SAMANTHA gave a written  
2 disclosure to the criminal court District Attorney. The Department has concern that many  
3 parties in this case have not considered SAMANTHA's welfare and additionally, the  
4 sibling relationship with the other children, in their attempts to make contact or ostracize  
5 SAMANTHA.

6 The Department has spoken at length with the maternal grandfather who resides in  
7 Texas. He has declined to provide the information needed to process an Interstate  
8 Compact Placement of Children (ICPC) request to assess him as a placement, noting  
9 that he is consulting an attorney. During interactions, the maternal grandfather has kept  
10 his opinions to himself, treated all four children equally and has not engaged in attempting  
11 to discuss the case. As such, the maternal grandfather has been permitted once weekly  
12 supervised phone contact that is supervised by either the foster parent or the  
13 Department. Currently, the contacts are going well and he has inquired about sending all  
14 four children gifts.

15 Initially, SAMANTHA was removed and placed in foster care. Shortly after, her siblings  
16 were removed and placed into a separate foster home. The children's sister-in-law,  
17 Alyshia Brown, came from California and resided in the Lawrence/Brown home to care for  
18 the children. Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown moved out of the home and into a second  
19 home of the Luisi's. This was verified and the placement moved forward. During the time  
20 of the placement, frequent home visitations were done to ensure that the parents were  
21 not residing in the home. DFS began to be concerns about Ms. Brown's protective  
22 capacity which were discussed with her. Ms. Brown advised that she missed her husband  
23 and it was hard to be separated from him as he resided in California. She advised that  
24 she was raising her own child and now, SAMANTHA, HEIDI, NIKKI and WYATT, on her  
25 own and she did not want to do this anymore. Late March 2014, Ms. Brown advised that it  
26 had become too much for her and she advised that she was going to return to California.  
27 The children came to Child Haven and awaited placement. Initially, they were separated  
28 and later a placement was secured for them together at St. Jude's. Since this time, Ms.  
Brown has advised that she has not seen Ms. Lawrence since she stopped caring for the  
children and indicated that there have been some family dynamics going on. She would  
not elaborate any further. To date, her husband, David Brown, the children's sibling, has  
not made contact with the Department to request sibling contact.

#### 22 **SIGNIFICANT CHANGES/PROBLEMS IN THE HOME**

23 SAMANTHA LAWRENCE came to the attention of the Department of Family Services in  
24 December 2013 after a report was received indicating that she had a black eye. An  
25 investigation ensued and SAMANTHA was found to have whip-like marks over her back  
26 and side of her abdomen in addition to her black eye. SAMANTHA reported she had hit  
27 her face on a cabinet door and that her injuries on her abdomen were from a fall on a  
28 trampoline. Mr. Brown and Ms. Lawrence made similar statements. The stories given to  
Child Protective Services appeared to be inconsistent with the injuries sustained by  
SAMANTHA. The case was staffed at CARES with Dr. Ceti who advised that  
SAMANTHA's injuries were fully consistent with child abuse, could not have been as a  
result of a fall on a trampoline and had not been self-inflicted. SAMANTHA was removed  
from the home. As the investigation continued, it was determined that HEIDI, NIKKI and  
WYATT were also unsafe and they were later removed from the care of Ms. Lawrence



1 and Mr. Brown. There is a criminal matter in the process of prosecution regarding the  
2 physical abuse SAMANTHA sustained. Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown are both out on  
3 bond. The case has been bound up to District Court.

4 The family has a very significant history with Child Protective Services. This was the 7<sup>th</sup>  
5 report of physical abuse to SAMANTHA in a five year time frame. SAMANTHA has  
6 sustained injuries including bruises to her face and eyes, a broken tooth, stitches and  
7 bruising to her abdomen. Injuries to the face and abdomen, along with repetitious injuries,  
8 lead to a substantially higher risk of future harm. With each report, however, there was no  
9 disclosure by any party. The collective reports demonstrate a consistent nature, despite  
10 multiple reporting sources, all with the same victim and the same allegations. Each of the  
11 reports show that there was no concern shown for SAMANTHA's welfare by Ms.  
12 Lawrence and Mr. Brown, but rather the inconvenience that the CPS investigations had  
13 caused them. During the below referenced reports, none of the reporting sources ever  
14 indicated any behavioral concerns for SAMANTHA. Each report noted that she performed  
15 well in school. The reports indicated that she was socially awkward, and tended to prefer  
16 being around adults than children, but none of the reports indicated there were emotional  
17 issues for SAMANTHA.

18 It should be noted that Mr. Brown has a conviction in California of Manslaughter and  
19 Corporal Punishment of a Child for the death of his child from several years ago. Each  
20 hotline report indicated that the reporting sources had significant concern for  
21 SAMANTHA's welfare and that they had attempted to address their concerns with Ms.  
22 Lawrence.

23 In March 2008, a report was received that SAMANTHA had bruises to her face including  
24 both eyes being blackened. During this report, the family indicated that the older child,  
25 David, caused the injuries to SAMANTHA. During this report, SAMANTHA was observed  
26 to have make-up on her face as applied by Ms. Lawrence to cover the bruising. She was  
27 9-years-old at the time.

28 In November 2008, another report came in that SAMANTHA again had bruising to her  
face. Again, SAMANTHA had make up on her face as applied by Ms. Lawrence. There  
were inconsistent stories provided about how SAMANTHA sustained the injuries. During  
this case, the school had documented injuries that had been sustained since the prior  
incident that included finger shaped bruises and later a broken tooth. Each time,  
SAMANTHA gave a different story about what happened to cause her injuries. During this  
report, SAMANTHA and her parents reported that a dog caused her injury.

In December 2009, a report was received that SAMANTHA sustained a deep cut to her  
wrist that she reported to the school had been caused by Mr. Brown throwing a butter  
knife at her. When questioned about it, SAMANTHA changed her story and stated that  
she cut herself on a fence in the backyard. The reporting source stated that the story  
appeared to be "rehearsed".

In February 2010, a report was received that SAMANTHA had a black eye and stitches to  
her eyebrow. During this report, SAMANTHA advised she had been hit by a remote

1 control by a younger sibling. This report indicated that SAMANTHA told the reporting  
2 source that with her prior broken tooth documented by the school, Ms. Lawrence took her  
3 to get it fixed and had her lie to the dentist about how it had been broken.

4 In January 2011, a report was received that SAMANTHA had a 4-5 inch round bruise to  
5 her abdomen and some marks under her eyes. SAMANTHA reported she fell out of bed.

6 In January 2012, a report was received that SAMANTHA had been withdrawn from  
7 school and had not been re-enrolled or enrolled in home school. Concerns were  
8 expressed due the significant history of SAMANTHA having unexplained injuries that the  
9 school had addressed with the parents and that she was now not in school.

10 In June 2014, SAMANTHA gave a full written disclosure naming Mr. Brown as the  
11 perpetrator of the physical abuse against SAMANTHA. The disclosure was a detailed  
12 disclosure and SAMANTHA testified in the criminal court. SAMANTHA named the  
13 previously referenced incidents and advised that she had been being abused since she  
14 was 3-years-old.

15 Ms. Lawrence has made significantly negative statements about SAMANTHA which have  
16 been observed including in her recorded calls while Mr. Brown was incarcerated on  
17 charges of child abuse. Ms. Lawrence appears to have extremely negative views of  
18 SAMANTHA and believes that everyone around her does too. Ms. Lawrence has reported  
19 that HEIDI and NIKKI also "hate" SAMANTHA. Since placement of the children together,  
20 there have been no concerns about SAMANTHA's relationship with her siblings outside of  
21 normal sibling rivalries. Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown have indicated that SAMANTHA is  
22 severely emotionally disturbed. Despite this, Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown did not get  
23 SAMANTHA any therapy or emotional help. Both indicate that they attempted to get her  
24 help, but report that therapists would not "take the case" because of CPS' prior  
25 involvement. No records have been provided and names of providers where services  
26 were sought have not been received. Relatives have indicated that Ms. Lawrence and Mr.  
27 Brown have told them that SAMANTHA injured herself throughout the years. It should be  
28 noted there have been no reports of any self-injuries since removal.

At this time, no party has admitted that SAMANTHA has been abused or neglected. Both  
appear to continue to blame SAMANTHA. As such, no safety plan can be effective as no  
safe party can be identified. Neither parent has taken responsibility for their role in  
SAMANTHA's injuries or the lack of ensuring she receive adequate care throughout the  
years. The injuries are so repetitious and continuous that they leave HEIDI, NIKKI and  
WYATT as risk, as well, as there is no parent with sufficient protective capacity to  
recognize the safety threat that is present in the home. The emotional well-being of the  
children also needs considered as there are extremely negative beliefs about  
SAMANTHA that not only impact her, but impact her siblings who love her, as well.

It is recommended that Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown engage fully in their case plan to  
address these safety concerns to provide a safe home for all four children to return to. Mr.  
Brown and Ms. Lawrence have both been referred to the Parenting Project for Parenting  
classes. Ms. Lawrence was referred to Red Rock for Non Offending Parenting classes

1 back in February 2014. In March 2014, she advised that she could not afford the classes  
2 although she has a privately retained attorney and bonded herself out of jail. She later  
3 was able to post Mr. Brown's \$250,000 bond. She was again referred in June 2014 to  
4 Red Rock Psychological. It is unknown if she has yet engaged.

5 Mr. Brown was referred to Red Rock Psychological. He was initially offered the referral in  
6 February 2014. A short time later, Mr. Brown was arrested for Child Abuse and remained  
7 in custody for several months. Mr. Brown was able to post his \$250,000 bond and be  
8 released. He was re-referred to Red Rock Psychological again in late July 2014 for  
9 physical abuse classes. It is unknown if he has yet engaged.

10 **SPECIALIST SUMMARY AND EVALUATION:**

11 SAMANTHA, HEIDI, NIKKI and WYATT were removed from Ms. Lawrence and Mr.  
12 Brown due to physical abuse of SAMANTHA. The family has a history of 7 reports in five  
13 years that all have had SAMANTHA as a victim of physical abuse. Each time, the injuries  
14 sustained by SAMANTHA were explained by an accidental injury or another sibling  
15 causing an injury to SAMANTHA. The school had significant concerns for SAMANTHA for  
16 several years and documented their concerns. SAMANTHA sustained black eyes, bruises  
17 to her abdomen, stitches to her face and a broken tooth. During this case, SAMANTHA  
18 had significant whip-like marks to her abdomen and a black eye. The story provided was  
19 medically inconsistent and Dr. Ceti advised that the explanation provided was not  
20 medically plausible. Both Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown have been charged with Felony  
21 Child Abuse and have a criminal court matter pending. Both are out on bond at this time  
22 awaiting trial. Mr. Brown has a prior conviction of Manslaughter and Corporal Punishment  
23 of a Child due to committing the death of his child many years ago.

24 Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown have not acknowledged the physical abuse that  
25 SAMANTHA has sustained. Out of state relatives appear to believe what they have been  
26 told by the family for the last several years including that SAMANTHA is at fault for her  
27 injuries. Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown have extremely negative beliefs about SAMANTHA  
28 that impacts her and her siblings.

Since the removal, SAMANTHA has made a disclosure that Mr. Brown perpetrated the  
physical abuse of her throughout the years. She made this disclosure to several people  
including the District Attorney, her therapist and other collaterals. SAMANTHA has  
discussed the older reports and indicated that they were not accidental injuries in the past  
that she sustained, but rather physical abuse perpetrated in her parent's home.

SAMANTHA, HEIDI, NIKKI and WYATT are placed at St. Jude's together and are doing  
well. The foster parents are nurturing and consistent, providing the children with structure.

The maternal grandfather stated he was willing to be a placement resource, but will not  
provide the information needed to complete an ICPC. He is currently the only relative that  
has contact with the children.

1 There is a No Contact order instituted by the criminal court as to Mr. Brown and Ms.  
2 Lawrence. The Department would respectfully recommend that if that order is lifted, that  
3 the Department work with the children's therapist to discuss whether parental contact is  
4 yet appropriate due to the parents' negative beliefs of SAMANTHA and how that may  
5 impact all of the children.

6 It is recommended that the case plan for Mr. Brown include parenting, physical abuse,  
7 meeting the children's needs, addressing his legal matters and family therapy. It is  
8 recommended that the case plan for Ms. Lawrence include parenting, non-offending  
9 parenting classes, meeting the children's needs, addressing her legal matters and family  
10 therapy, as well. It is important that Mr. Brown and Ms. Lawrence recognize that to move  
11 forward, they must acknowledge the safety threat and be able to demonstrate a  
12 willingness to protect against it.

13 It is therefore respectfully recommended that SAMANTHA LAWRENCE, HEIDI BROWN,  
14 NIKKI BROWN and WYATT BROWN be made Wards of the Family Court and placed in  
15 the legal custody of the Clark County Department of Family Services. It is recommended  
16 that the parents' case plans be adopted and that the permanency plan be reunification at  
17 this time.

18 Submitted By:

19 *M. Tallent* (H#2)

20 MARYTE TALLENT  
21 PERMANENCY CASE MANAGER

*Heather Richardson*

HEATHER RICHARDSON  
PERMANENCY SUPERVISOR

22 DATE: 8/8/2014

23 Hay servicios gratis de ayuda con otros idiomas. Para pedir un intérprete, llame por favor al Coordinador  
24 de Servicios de Intérpretes al 671-4578.

25 Free language assistance services are available. To request an interpreter, please call the Language Assistance  
26 Coordinator at 671-4578.

Dear Dad,

You are the worst fucking  
excuse as a father + stepfather there is.  
You treated me like a low-life creep and  
called me every fucking name in the book.  
You beat me every god damn fucking day.  
I was always so scared to come  
home because I didn't know what was  
going to happen when I walked  
through that damn fucking door.  
You never called me by my name, you  
either called me a bitch or some-  
thing else like a fuck. You would  
have me do an exercise for an hour  
and a half w/o a single fucking  
drink or break. If you want to  
know how it started or when all of  
this started lets go all the way  
back to when I was 3. You called me  
a spoiled rotten bitch who didn't have  
any fucking manners at all, you locked  
me in a ear while I was asleep, you  
would have me clean everything, you  
would punish me for things that  
the dog did, you shot my hand +  
broke my hand w/ a bb gun, you  
would beat me everyday when I came

home from school, you would throw  
me at the dog and make him bite  
me, you would beat me w/ everything  
& anything you could get your hands  
on: belt, frying pan, spatula, remote,  
pot, flashlight, shoe, hanger, wood,  
broomstick, and more. Whenever (PS)  
got involved, you always treated me  
like a normal child for about a week  
or so. This last time before we got  
taken away and put where we are  
now, you beat me on my back then  
when I tried to move you would  
either pull my hair, or hit me on  
the face. You used to leave me to the  
point where I would have to steal  
food until lunch, the next day at  
school. You made all of us promise  
not to tell anyone what was going  
on otherwise we wouldn't be able to  
go back home w/ you. At the last  
visit that we had, you told me to  
go to court & testify saying that I  
hit myself on the back because I  
didn't get a cell phone for Christmas.

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## REGISTER OF ACTIONS

CASE NO. J-14-319202-P2

Lawrence, Melissa Dawn, Mother

§  
§  
§  
§  
§  
§  
§

Case Type: Juvenile Protection  
Date Filed: 01/28/2014  
Location: Family Juvenile  
Cross-Reference Case Number: J319202  
UNITY Case Number: 1345085

### RELATED CASE INFORMATION

Related Cases  
D-15-510944-R (Juvenile Related Cases)

### PARTY INFORMATION

Father	Brown, Donald	DOB: 03/15/1963	Lead Attorneys Donn W Prokopius <i>Retained</i> 702-474-0500(W)
Juvenile Subject Minor	Brown, Heidi Renee	DOB: 01/04/2004	Children's Attorney Project <i>Retained</i>
Juvenile Subject Minor	Brown, Nikki Rae	DOB: 01/04/2004	Children's Attorney Project <i>Retained</i>
Juvenile Subject Minor	Brown, Wyatt Carl	DOB: 07/15/2009	Children's Attorney Project <i>Retained</i>
Juvenile Subject Minor	Lawrence, Samantha Jay	DOB: 07/08/1998	Children's Attorney Project <i>Retained</i>
Mother	Lawrence, Melissa Dawn	DOB: 08/07/1980	Michael I. Gowdey <i>Retained</i> 7024710321(W)
State of Nevada	State of Nevada		Steven B Wolfson <i>Retained</i> 702-455-5320(W)

### EVENTS & ORDERS OF THE COURT

07/30/2014 Adjudicatory Trial (10:00 AM) (Judicial Officer Giuliani, Cynthia N.)  
*Alternative Testimony*

**Minutes**  
07/30/2014 10:00 AM  
- (Wyatt, Nikki and Heidi Brown; Samantha Lawrence)  
Department of Family Services (DFS) represented by Heather Richardson. COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE (CASA) represented by Carol Smith. Children's Attorney Project (CAP) represented by Amy Honodel for Samantha and Ms. Michelle Hauser for the Brown minors. Discussions regarding another date for Trial due to timeframes. The Court advised Trial will begin today. The State proceeded with Trial.

Testimony and Exhibits (See Worksheets) Matter TRAILED for Mr. Prokopius to discuss with the parents. Matter RECALLED- all parties present as before. Mr. Prokopius advised the matter has been negotiated and the parents are ready to enter a plea. NEGOTIAIONS (MOTHER & FATHER): The State agreed to file an amended Petition 2. Amendments stated on the record. The State agrees that anything divulged during the course of any recommended treatment shall not be used against the parents should any criminal charges exist or arise out of these allegations. Court ADVISED the parents of THEIR RIGHTS who PLED NO CONTEST to the allegations that will be outlined in the amended Petition 2 to be filed by the State. Court ACCEPTED plea and ORDERED, matter set for Report and Disposition. Court FURTHER ORDERED, subject minors DECLARED under the Court s jurisdiction as Abused/Neglected Child(ren) and that legal custody is placed with the Clark County Department of Family Services. Formal supervision through the Department of Family Services. Matter set for Review Hearing. Mr. Prokopius advised the minors have a trip scheduled to Disney Land with the foster placement and noted the parents are giving oral permissions to go on the trip. Court ORDERED, the minors are approved to travel to California for the Disney Land trip. CLERK'S NOTE: Minutes amended to reflect that Judge Becker heard the matter. 9/13/2016 NT

Parties Present

Return to Register of Actions



## REGISTER OF ACTIONS

CASE NO. J-14-319202-P2

**Lawrence, Melissa Dawn, Mother**

www.ck12.org

Case Type: **Juvenile Protection**  
Date Filed: **01/28/2014**  
Location: **Family Juvenile**  
Cross-Reference Case Number: **J319202**  
UNITY Case Number: **1345085**

### RELATED CASE INFORMATION

## Related Cases

**D-15-510944-R (Juvenile Related Cases)**

## PARTY INFORMATION

<b>Father</b>	<b>Brown, Donald</b>	<b>DOB: 03/15/1963</b>	<b>Lead Attorneys Donn W Prokopius Retained 702-474-0500(W)</b>
<b>Juvenile Subject Minor</b>	<b>Brown, Heidi Renee</b>	<b>DOB: 01/04/2004</b>	<b>Children's Attorney Project Retained</b>
<b>Juvenile Subject Minor</b>	<b>Brown, Nikki Rae</b>	<b>DOB: 01/04/2004</b>	<b>Children's Attorney Project Retained</b>
<b>Juvenile Subject Minor</b>	<b>Brown, Wyatt Carl</b>	<b>DOB: 07/15/2009</b>	<b>Children's Attorney Project Retained</b>
<b>Juvenile Subject Minor</b>	<b>Lawrence, Samantha Jay</b>	<b>DOB: 07/06/1998</b>	<b>Children's Attorney Project Retained</b>
<b>Mother</b>	<b>Lawrence, Melissa Dawn</b>	<b>DOB: 08/07/1980</b>	<b>Michael I. Gowdey Retained 7024710321(W)</b>
<b>State of Nevada</b>	<b>State of Nevada</b>		<b>Steven B Wolfson Retained 702-455-5320(W)</b>

## EVENTS & ORDERS OF THE COURT

08/13/2014 | Disposition Hearing. (2:00 PM) (Judicial Officer Giulliani, Cynthia N.)  
*Parents*

**Minutes**

08/13/2014 2:00 PM

- Matter heard with Review Hearing. (Wyatt, Nikki and Heidi Brown; Samantha Lawrence) Department of Family Services (DFS) represented by Maryte Talent. Children's Attorney Project (CAP) represented by Ms. Amy Honodel and Ms. Michelle Hauser. COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE (CASA) represented by Ms. Bonnie Mayes. Mr. Don Porkopius expressed the parents do have finical limitations and addressed the fees for the Red Rock Assessment. The State

noted the parents may be able to work out an agreement with Red Rock for the fees. The Court reviewed the report and the caseplans. Discussions regarding the No Contact Order from the criminal matter and to what extent that is. Ms. Hauser requested this Court make an Order to clarify what type of No Contact Order is in place and if for all the minors. The State noted the No Contact Order was confirmed through the criminal matter and once the parents are involved in services, they can address visits in a therapeutic manner. Court ORDERED, subject minors DECLARED under the Court's jurisdiction as Abused/Neglected Child(ren) and that legal custody is placed with the Clark County Department of Family Services. Formal supervision through the Department of Family Services. Caseplan ACCEPTED and SUBMITTED. Parents shall comply with the caseplans. Court FURTHER ORDERED, the minors may write letters to the parents. Extended family may have contact as long as they are appropriate and do not discuss this matter with the minors. Matter set for Permanency Planning Hearing.

Parties Present

Return to Register of Actions

  
CLERK OF THE COURT

**MOT**  
STEVEN WOLFSON  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
FELICIA QUINLAN  
Deputy District Attorney  
Nevada State Bar No. 11690  
601 N. Pecos Rd., Ste. 470  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101  
(702) 455-5320

DISTRICT COURT  
FAMILY DIVISION - JUVENILE  
CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA

In the Matter of:

SAMANTHA LAWRENCE  
Date of Birth: 07-06-1998

HEIDI BROWN  
Date of Birth: 01-04-2004

NIKKI BROWN  
Date of Birth: 01-04-2004

WYATT BROWN  
Date of Birth: 05-30-2009

CASE NO. J-14-319202-P2  
DEPT. NO. K  
COURTROOM 22

Minors.

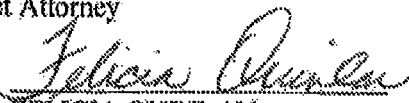
**MOTION FOR FINDING THAT AGGRAVATED CIRCUMSTANCES EXIST UNDER WHICH  
REASONABLE EFFORTS ARE NOT REQUIRED PURSUANT TO NRS 432B.393(3)**

COMES NOW, the Clark County Department of Family Services, (hereinafter "DFS"), by and through Case Manager Maryte Tallent and the Clark County District Attorney's Office by and through District Attorney Steven Wolfson and Deputy District Attorney, Felicia Quinlan, and hereby moves this Honorable Court for an Order finding that DFS is not required to make reasonable efforts to reunify the above-named children with the biological parents, pursuant to NRS 432B.393. This Motion is based upon the following Points and Authorities and Affidavit, and any oral argument that may be requested by the Court.

DATED this 7 day of November 2014.

STEVEN B. WOLFSON  
District Attorney

By:

  
FELICIA QUINLAN  
Deputy District Attorney  
Juvenile Division

1  
2 NOTICE OF MOTION

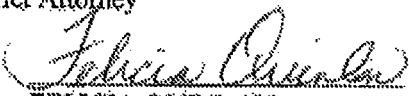
3 TO: MELISSA LAWRENCE, natural mother  
4 TO: DONALD BROWN, natural father  
5 TO: DONN PROKOPIUS, counsel for natural parents  
6 TO: MICHELLE HAUSER, counsel for the subject minors

7 YOU AND EACH OF YOU WILL PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the undersigned will bring  
8 the above-entitled Motion on for hearing before the Family Juvenile Court, Courtroom 22, of the Eighth  
9 Judicial District Court, Family Division, 601 North Pecos, Las Vegas, Nevada on the 12 day of  
10 DEC at 9:30 a.m., or as soon thereafter as counsel may be heard.

11 DATED this 7 day of November 2014.

12 STEVEN B. WOLFSON  
13 District Attorney

14 By:

  
15 FELICIA QUINLAN  
16 Deputy District Attorney  
17 Nevada State Bar No. 11690  
18 601 N. Pecos Rd., Ste. 470  
19 Las Vegas, Nevada 89101  
20 (702) 455-5320  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28

1 **POINTS AND AUTHORITIES**

2 **I.**

3 **STATEMENT OF FACTS**

4 The natural mother of the subject minors, Samantha Lawrence and Heidi, Nikki, and Wyatt  
5 Brown, is MELISSA LAWRENCE. The natural father of the subject minors, Heidi, Nikki, and Wyatt  
6 Brown, is DONALD BROWN. The natural father of Samantha is unknown, as Ms. Lawrence has failed  
7 to give his name or information to the Department of Family Services (DFS) or the Court.  
8

9 This family has a significant history with Child Protective Services (CPS) and DFS.  
10 Specifically, there have been seven reports of physical abuse to Samantha occurring in the home of Ms.  
11 Lawrence and Mr. Brown in five years.

12 In March 2008, CPS received a report that Samantha had bruises to her face including both  
13 eyes being blackened. During this report, the family indicated that the older child, David, caused the  
14 injuries to Samantha. During this report, Samantha Ms. Lawrence applied make-up on Samantha's face  
15 to cover the bruising, which was observed by school staff. Samantha was 9-years-old at the time.  
16

17 In November 2008, another report came in that Samantha again had bruising to her face. Again,  
18 Samantha had make up on her face as applied by Ms. Lawrence. There were inconsistent stories  
19 provided about how Samantha sustained the injuries. During this case, the school had documented  
20 injuries that had been sustained since the prior incident that included finger shaped bruises and later a  
21 broken tooth. Each time, Samantha gave a different story about what happened to cause her injuries.  
22 During this report, Samantha and her parents reported that a dog caused her injury.  
23

24 In December 2009, CPS received a report that Samantha sustained a deep cut to her wrist that  
25 she reported to the school had been caused by Mr. Brown throwing a butter knife at her. When  
26 questioned about it, Samantha changed her story and stated that she cut herself on a fence in the  
27 backyard.  
28

1 In February 2010, CPS received a report that Samantha had a black eye and stitches to her  
2 eyebrow. During this report, Samantha claimed she had been hit by a remote control by a younger  
3 sibling. Samantha revealed that, when Ms. Lawrence took her to get her previously broken tooth fixed,  
4 she had her lie to the dentist about how it had been broken.

5 In January 2011, CPS received yet another report that Samantha was injured in the home. This  
6 time Samantha had a 4-5 inch round bruise to her abdomen and some marks under her eyes. Samantha  
7 reported she fell out of bed.  
8

9 In January 2012, CPS received a report that Samantha been withdrawn from school and had not  
10 been re-enrolled or enrolled in home school. The report revealed concerns regarding the significant  
11 history of unexplained injuries to Samantha and that the school had addressed with these concerns with  
12 the parents and that now she was not in school.

13 In December 2013, the most recent report regarding Samantha came into CPS. Samantha had  
14 bruising to her back. This last report resulted in the instant case. In addition to the history of reports to  
15 CPS, two separate petitions have been filed regarding this family.  
16

17 Petition #1 was filed March 16, 2010 with the following allegations; The subject minors'  
18 mother is MELISSA BROWN. The father of SAMANTHA is unknown. DONALD BROWN is the  
19 father of HEIDI, NIKKI and WYATT; The subject minors resided with MELISSA BROWN and  
20 DONALD BROWN at the time of the alleged abuse/neglect and MELISSA BROWN and DONALD  
21 BROWN were people regularly found in the home with the subject minors for purposes of NRS  
22 432B.130; The father of SAMANTHA is unknown, though as a parent he is responsible for her welfare  
23 for purposes of NRS 432B.130; MELISSA BROWN and/or DONALD BROWN physically abused  
24 and/or improperly disciplined and/or improperly supervised subject minor SAMANTHA resulting in  
25 marks on SAMANTHA's face. Neither MELISSA nor DONALD provided a credible explanation as to  
26 the source of SAMANTHA's injury. Furthermore, MELISSA reportedly used makeup to cover up the  
27 marks on SAMANTHA before sending her to school. MELISSA BROWN and DONALD BROWN  
28

1 have a history of CPS investigations regarding marks on SAMANTHA BROWN. The father of  
2 SAMANTHA has not provided for her or had any contact with her for a period in excess of six (6)  
3 months; MELISSA BROWN and/or DONALD BROWN neglected the subject minor(s)' educational  
4 needs by keeping the subject minor(s) out of school for a week at or around the time SAMANTHA had  
5 a mark on her face. MELISSA BROWN and DONALD BROWN neglected the subject minors by  
6 exposing them to the improper discipline and/or abuse of SAMANTHA, resulting in emotional harm to  
7 the subject minors. DONALD BROWN is a registered felon for charges of corporal punishment of a  
8 child and voluntary manslaughter. The subject minors are in need of protection as a result of the abuse  
9 and/or neglect described above.

11 During this investigation, CPS placed the children with fictive kin with a safety plan in place for  
12 supervised contact with the parents. See Exhibit 1. This safety plan marked the first time the children  
13 were removed from their parents' care. The petition in this case was eventually dismissed and the  
14 children returned to the care of Mr. Brown and Ms. Lawrence.

16 On January 28, 2014, the second petition for this family was filed. The allegations, which were  
17 substantiated as true when Mr. and Mrs. Salinas both entered no contest pleas were: The mother is  
18 MELISSA LAWRENCE; the father to Samantha is UNKNOWN; the father to Nikki, Heidi and Wyatt  
19 is DONALD BROWN; The subject minors resided with MELISSA LAWRENCE and DONALD  
20 BROWN at the time of the alleged abuse or neglect, and both are persons responsible for the welfare of  
21 the subject minors and regularly found in the home pursuant to NRS 432B.130; In December 2013, the  
22 subject minor Samantha was found to have injuries that were characterized as "definite abuse" by a  
23 physician specializing in child abuse; the injuries included bruising and/or abrasions and/or loop marks  
24 and/or linear marks of differing ages to her back; the injuries were such that they could not have  
25 occurred without a deliberate but unreasonable act or failure to act by the person or persons responsible  
26 for the subject minor's welfare; see NRS 432B.450; In December 2013, DONALD BROWN physically  
27 abused the subject minor Samantha by hitting and/or striking and/or beating her with a belt and/or other  
28

1 object and/or his hands, resulting in the injuries described above; Over the course of the past six years,  
2 CPS has been called to the home on multiple occasions as a result of reports of injuries to Samantha;  
3 DONALD BROWN mentally injured the subject minor Samantha by causing her to experience extreme  
4 fear, anxiety and emotional distress related to the ongoing physical abuse; MELISSA LAWRENCE  
5 failed to protect Samantha despite her knowledge of the ongoing physical abuse by DONALD  
6 BROWN; MELISSA LAWRENCE mentally injured the subject minor Samantha by failing to obtain  
7 counseling and/or therapy for her to address the severe emotional distress caused by the ongoing  
8 physical abuse by DONALD BROWN; The subject minors Heidi, Nikki and Wyatt are deemed to be  
9 unsafe in the home due to the ongoing abuse of Samantha pursuant to NRS 432B.330(1)(c). DONALD  
10 BROWN is presumed to be an unfit caregiver for the subject minors pursuant to NRS 432B.555;  
11 DONALD BROWN was convicted of felony manslaughter and Corporal Punishment of a Child in  
12 relation to the death of his infant child in the 1980s; The subject minors are in need of protection in  
13 accordance with NRS 432B.330 as a result of the abuse/neglect described above.  
14  
15

16 In June 2014, Samantha gave a full written disclosure naming Mr. Brown as the perpetrator of  
17 the physical abuse she had suffered. In addition to the detailed disclosure, Samantha also testified in a  
18 criminal proceeding related to the physical abuse she suffered at home. Samantha explained that  
19 throughout the CPS reports laid out above, she was abused and had been abused since she was three  
20 years old.  
21

22 On July 30, 2014, at the firm trial setting, both Mr. Brown and Ms. Lawrence entered no contest  
23 pleas to an amended petition as laid out above. On August 13, 2014, this Court took jurisdiction of the  
24 children and adjudicated them abused or neglected children in need of protection from the Court. The  
25 Court accepted case plans for Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown and ordered them to comply with them.

26 It should be noted that Mr. Brown has a conviction in California of Manslaughter and Corporal  
27 Punishment of a Child for the death of his child from several years ago. This conviction was included in  
28 the allegations in Petition #2 to which Mr. Brown pled no contest.



II.  
LEGAL ARGUMENT

NRS 432B.393 delineates the procedures for the preservation and reunification of family and child to prevent or eliminate the need for removal from home before placement in foster care, to make a safe return to home possible, and to determine whether reasonable efforts have been made.

Specifically, NRS 432B.393(2) states:

2. In determining the reasonable efforts required by subsection 1, the health and safety of the child must be the paramount concern.

Moreover, NRS 432B.393(3) states:

3. An agency which provides child welfare services is not required to make the reasonable efforts required by subsection 1 if the court finds that:

(a) A parent or other primary caretaker of the child has:

(1) Committed, aided or abetted in the commission of, or attempted, conspired or solicited to commit murder or voluntary manslaughter;

(2) Caused the abuse or neglect of the child, or of another child of the parent or primary caretaker, which resulted in substantial bodily harm to the abused or neglected child;

(3) Caused the abuse or neglect of the child, a sibling of the child or another child in the household, and the abuse or neglect was so extreme or repetitious as to indicate that any plan to return the child to the home would result in an unacceptable risk to the health or welfare of the child.

(d) The child or a sibling of the child was previously removed from the home, adjudicated to have been abused or neglected, returned to the home and subsequently removed from the home as a result of additional abuse or neglect;

DFS should not have to make reasonable efforts to reunify Mr. Brown and Ms. Lawrence with the subject minors, Samantha Lawrence and Heidi, Nikki, and Wyatt Brown, because sections 3(a)(1-3) and (3)(d) of NRS 432B.393(3) apply to the parents' detriment.

First, as Mr. Brown acknowledged with his plea to Petition #2 in this matter, he has been criminally convicted of felony manslaughter and Corporal Punishment of a Child. As such, aggravated circumstances exist in this case so that DFS should not have to make reasonable efforts to reunify any of the children with Mr. Brown.

Second, Mr. Brown has caused substantial bodily harm to Samantha, according to her written disclosure. In addition, Ms. Lawrence either also caused that harm or neglected Samantha to the point that substantial bodily harm resulted. Samantha has sustained injuries including bruises to her face and

1 eyes, a broken tooth, stitches and bruising to her abdomen. Injuries to the face and abdomen, along with  
2 repetitious injuries, lead to a substantially higher risk of future harm. Pursuant to NRS 0.060 substantial  
3 bodily harm is defined as bodily injury which: (1) creates a substantial risk of death; or (2) causes  
4 serious, permanent disfigurement; or (3) causes protracted loss or impairment of the function of any  
5 bodily member or organ; or (4) causes prolonged pain. Samantha's broken tooth, cuts requiring  
6 stitches, and scars are permanent disfigurements, and these injuries, as well as her bruising, have caused  
7 prolonged pain suffered by the child. All these injuries occurred in the family home of Mr. Brown and  
8 Ms. Lawrence. The extent of Samantha's injuries over the years is also aggravated circumstances such  
9 that any plan to reunify the children would result in an unacceptable risk to their welfare. Accordingly,  
10 DFS should not have to make reasonable efforts to reunify the family.

11 Third, the seven CPS reports over five years and two Court petitions reveal a pattern of extreme  
12 and repetitious abuse. This pattern demonstrates a consistently abusive home environment, despite  
13 multiple reporting sources, all with the same victim and the same allegations. Every incident report  
14 includes evidence that there was no concern shown for Samantha's welfare by Ms. Lawrence and Mr.  
15 Brown. Instead, the parents focused on the inconvenience the CPS investigations had caused them.  
16 Samantha has been repeatedly bruised on and around her face and head throughout the years. In every  
17 investigation, the parents have consistently been worried about themselves instead of Samantha,  
18 including applying make-up to cover the bruising. Throughout this case, Ms. Lawrence has made  
19 hurtful statements about Samantha and has claimed the other children hate her. This is extreme and  
20 repetitive. This pattern of abuse is harmful to Samantha, Heidi, Nikki, and Wyatt and indicates that any  
21 further efforts by the agency would be futile.

22 Fourth, the parents' pattern of conduct has resulted in two petitions for abuse/neglect and two  
23 removals of the children from their care. In February 2010, the parents signed a safety plan that that  
24 Samantha would stay with fictive kin and have no contact with them. This was because of the injury to  
25 her left eye. This removal was the first time the parents' access to the children was restricted. Once the  
26 investigation concluded, the family was reunified. Then, after another injury to Samantha in December  
27 2013, the children have all been removed from their parents' care. They remain out of their parents'  
28 care at this time. The situation with this family is consistent with the language and intent of NRS  
432B.393(3)(d) and indicates that any plan of reunification is contrary to the best interests of the  
children.

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III.

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing, DFS and the State respectfully request that the Court grant this motion and make a finding that DFS is not required to make reasonable efforts to reunify Melissa Lawrence and Donald Brown with the subject minors, Samantha Lawrence and Heidi, Nikki, and Wyatt Brown.

DATED this 7 day of November 2014.

STEVEN WOLFSON  
District Attorney

By:

  
FELICIA QUINLAN

Deputy District Attorney  
Nevada State Bar No. 11690  
601 N. Pecos Rd., Ste. 470  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101  
(702) 455-5320

**AFFIDAVIT OF MARYTE TALLENT IN SUPPORT OF  
MOTION TO WAIVE REASONABLE EFFORTS**

STATE OF NEVADA           )  
  ) ss.  
COUNTY OF CLARK        )

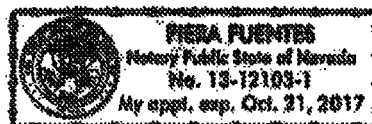
I, MARYTE TALLENT, hereby swear (or affirm) under penalty of perjury, that the following assertions are true of my own personal knowledge:

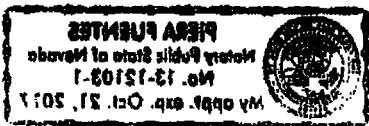
1. I am employed by the Clark County Department of Family Services and am assigned to the case of Samantha Lawrence and Heidi, Nikki, and Wyatt Brown in the above-entitled matter.
2. The Department of Family Services requests that it not be required to make reasonable efforts to reunify Samantha Lawrence and Heidi, Nikki, and Wyatt Brown with their parents, Melissa Lawrence and Donald Brown, based upon the extreme and repetitious abuse of Samantha – specifically that she has had multiple injuries documented in seven CPS reports in five years – as well as the fact that the children were previously removed from their parents' care in 2010, then reunified, and subsequently removed again. In addition, Donald Brown and/or Melissa Lawrence have abused or neglected Samantha resulting in substantial bodily harm and Donald Brown has been convicted of manslaughter in relation to the death of his daughter.
3. I have read the forgoing motion and all of the information asserted is true to the best of my knowledge and understanding.

  
MARYTE TALLENT

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before me  
this 7<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2014.  
by: MARYTE TALLENT

NOTARY PUBLIC in and for the said  
County and State of Nevada





# EXHIBIT 1

CASE NAME: Dawn Lawrence

NEVADA SAFETY PLAN

CASE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe how safety concerns will be managed. Provide specific provisions, time frames, tasks or activities and responsible parties.

List identified safety threat to specified child and child's age	Describe safety action or task selected to control the safety threat	When will it occur?	Who will complete the task and where will it occur?	Describe method for monitoring safety action or task.
Sonnette has an injury on her left eye.	Sonnette will stay with Doreen & Doreen will not have any communication with either Mr. Brown or Ms. Lawrence	@ all times, until the condition of the wound is improved	Ms. & Mrs. Lawrence & Mr. Brown & Ms. Lawrence	unannounced visits

The child may be placed into protective custody if the participants in this plan are unwilling or unable to carry out the safety plan activities.

Supervisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date 8-23-10

Supervisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date 8-23-10

Supervisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date 8-23-10

Worker Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date 8-23-10

Worker Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date 8-23-10

Worker Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date 8-23-10

Supervisory Review Signature (if any) \_\_\_\_\_ Date 8-23-10

Supervisory Review Signature (if any) \_\_\_\_\_ Date 8-23-10

For all safety plan participants: By signing this safety plan you are acknowledging that 1) you were informed of the action or task you have agreed to perform; 2) you understand and are in agreement with the requirements and will fulfill them to the best of your ability; 3) you agree to contact the caseworker if you are unable to perform your responsibilities. Either you have received a copy of this plan or one will be mailed to you within the next 48 hours.

Name of Adult Responsible for Protecting Child \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Child \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Adult Responsible for Protecting Child \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Child \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Adult Responsible for Protecting Child \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Child \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

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Name of Adult Responsible for Protecting Child \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Child \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Safety Plan will be reviewed on: 8/30/10

Collaborative Policy for: Clark County Department of Family Services, DCFS & Washoe County Department of Social Services

## REGISTER OF ACTIONS

CASE NO. J-14-319202-P2

Lawrence, Melissa Dawn, Mother

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Case Type: **Juvenile Protection**  
Date Filed: **01/28/2014**  
Location: **Family Juvenile**  
Cross-Reference Case Number: **J319202**  
UNITY Case Number: **1345085**

### RELATED CASE INFORMATION

#### Related Cases

D-15-510944-R (Juvenile Related Cases)

### PARTY INFORMATION

<b>Father</b>	<b>Brown, Donald</b>	DOB: 03/15/1963	<b>Lead Attorneys</b> <b>Donn W Prokopius</b> <i>Retained</i> 702-474-0500(W)
<b>Juvenile Subject Minor</b>	<b>Brown, Heidi Renee</b>	DOB: 01/04/2004	<b>Children's Attorney Project</b> <i>Retained</i>
<b>Juvenile Subject Minor</b>	<b>Brown, Nikki Rae</b>	DOB: 01/04/2004	<b>Children's Attorney Project</b> <i>Retained</i>
<b>Juvenile Subject Minor</b>	<b>Brown, Wyatt Carl</b>	DOB: 07/15/2009	<b>Children's Attorney Project</b> <i>Retained</i>
<b>Juvenile Subject Minor</b>	<b>Lawrence, Samantha Jay</b>	DOB: 07/06/1998	<b>Children's Attorney Project</b> <i>Retained</i>
<b>Mother</b>	<b>Lawrence, Melissa Dawn</b>	DOB: 08/07/1980	<b>Michael I. Gowdey</b> <i>Retained</i> 7024710321(W)
<b>State of Nevada</b>	<b>State of Nevada</b>		<b>Steven B Wolfson</b> <i>Retained</i> 702-455-5320(W)

### EVENTS & ORDERS OF THE COURT

12/12/2014 | **Motion** (9:30 AM) (Judicial Officer Giuliani, Cynthia N.)  
12/12/2014, 01/14/2015  
*Motion for Finding that Aggravated Circumstances Exist Under Which Reasonable Efforts Are Not Required Pursuant to NRS 432b.393(3)*

**Minutes**  
12/12/2014 9:30 AM  
- (Samantha Lawrence; Heidi, Nikki and Wyatt Brown)  
Department of Family Services (DFS) represented by Maryte Talent. Mr. Gregory Mills present as counsel for the maternal grandparents. Children's Attorney Project represented by Amy Honodel. Mr. Donn Prokopius requested a continuance due to a conflict between the parents and the mother wishing to hire



new counsel for herself. Ms. Michelle Hauser present on behalf of the Brown children stated she is not opposed to a continuance since she has not had recent contact with the minors and would like to gather information as to their wishes. The State requested the continuance be with a month since the minors have been out of care for a long time. Mr. Mills stated the minors have been out of care since August 2014. Mr. Prokopius requested the parents be allowed to have visitation since the foster parents are not allowing contact. Discussions regarding the father services and compliance. Ms. Talent noted the minors are in counseling. Further discussions regarding visitations. Court ORDERED, matter CONTINUED to January 14, 2015 @ 3:00 pm. The Department shall arrange a CFT to address issues with visitations with parents. The therapist shall assess the minors and report what the risks are in visiting the parents. Court FURTHER ORDERED, Permanency Planning Hearing is RESET to January 14, 2015 @ 3:00 pm.

01/14/2015 3:00 PM

- Matter heard with Permanency Planning HEaring. (Samantha Lawrence; Heidi, Nikki and Wyatt Brown) Department of Family Services (DFS) represented by Maryle Talent and Lisa Shaw. Children's Attorney Project (CAP) represented by Amy Honodel. Ms. Dawn Throne present for Ms. Michelle Hauser on behalf of the Brown minors. Mr. Gregory Mills present for the maternal grandparents. Ms. Throne advised they have not been served with the State's Motion and made an oral objection. Further, the Brown minors wish to go home or at least have visitation. The Department and the State have admitted it was never their intentions to reunify with the parents. Ms. Michael Gowdy advised the Criminal Court is not in position to decide if there should be a No Contact Order and therefore the Judge has passed that decision to this Court. Mr. Gowdy provided the Court with the Order dissolving the No Contact Order. The State noted the Order has been reinstated and is pending approval upon this Court's decision as it appears the Judge is reviewing the family case. The State advised they have requested transcripts of the last criminal hearing. Ms. Throne stated the minors are opposing to the No Contact Order. Ms. Honodel reported Samantha does not wish to have contact with the parents. Ms. Shaw requested there be line of sight supervised contact in the event the Court is inclined to grant visitations. Further discussions regarding providing reasonable efforts. Following discussions: Court ORDERED, Motion is DENIED. All therapists shall provide a report as to the recommendations of the minors having visits with the parents. Line of Sight Supervised Visits are APPROVED providing it does not affect the criminal matter and all is appropriate. Further, the parents shall not discuss this matter with the minors. Court FURTHER ORDERED, NO CONTACT ORDER STANDS for Samantha Lawrence.

Parties Present

Return to Register of Actions

## REGISTER OF ACTIONS

CASE NO. J-14-319202-P2

Lawrence, Melissa Dawn, Mother

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Case Type: **Juvenile Protection**  
Date Filed: **01/28/2014**  
Location: **Family Juvenile**  
Cross-Reference Case Number: **J319202**  
UNITY Case Number: **1345085**

### RELATED CASE INFORMATION

#### Related Cases

D-15-510944-R (Juvenile Related Cases)

### PARTY INFORMATION

Father	Brown, Donald	DOB: 03/15/1963	Lead Attorneys Donn W Prokopius <i>Retained</i> 702-474-0500(W)
Juvenile Subject Minor	Brown, Heidi Renee	DOB: 01/04/2004	Children's Attorney Project <i>Retained</i>
Juvenile Subject Minor	Brown, Nikki Rae	DOB: 01/04/2004	Children's Attorney Project <i>Retained</i>
Juvenile Subject Minor	Brown, Wyatt Carl	DOB: 07/15/2009	Children's Attorney Project <i>Retained</i>
Juvenile Subject Minor	Lawrence, Samantha Jay	DOB: 07/06/1998	Children's Attorney Project <i>Retained</i>
Mother	Lawrence, Melissa Dawn	DOB: 08/07/1980	Michael I. Gowdey <i>Retained</i> 7024710321(W)
State of Nevada	State of Nevada		Steven B Wolfson <i>Retained</i> 702-455-5320(W)

### EVENTS & ORDERS OF THE COURT

01/14/2015 [Permanency Planning Hearing](#) (3:00 PM) (Judicial Officer Giuliani, Cynthia N.)

#### Minutes

01/14/2015 3:00 PM

- Matter heard with Motion (Samantha Lawrence; Heidi, Nikki and Wyatt Brown) Department of Family Services (DFS) represented by Maryte Talent and Lisa Shaw. Children's Attorney Project (CAP) represented by Amy Honodel. Ms. Dawn Throne present for Ms. Michelle Hauser on behalf of the Brown minors. Mr. Gregory Mills present for the maternal grandparents. Ms. Throne advised they have not been served with the State's Motion and made an oral objection. Further, the Brown minors wish to go home or at least have visitation.

The Department and the State have admitted it was never their intentions to reunify with the parents. Ms. Michael Gowdy advised the Criminal Court is not in position to decide if there should be a No Contact Order and therefore the Judge has passed that decision to this Court. Mr. Gowdy provided the Court with the Order dissolving the No Contact Order. The State noted the Order has been reinstated and is pending approval upon this Court's decision as it appears the Judge is reviewing the family case. The State advised they have requested transcripts of the last criminal hearing. Ms. Throne stated the minors are opposing to the No Contact Order. Ms. Honodel reported Samantha does not wish to have contact with the parents. Ms. Shaw requested there be line of sight supervised contact in the event the Court is inclined to grant visitations. Further discussions regarding providing reasonable efforts. Following discussions: Court ORDERED, Motion is DENIED. All therapists shall provide a report as to the recommendations of the minors having visits with the parents. Line of Sight Supervised Visits are APPROVED providing it does not affect the criminal matter and all is appropriate. Further, the parents shall not discuss this matter with the minors. Court FURTHER ORDERED, NO CONTACT ORDER STANDS for Samantha Lawrence. Discussions regarding the permanency plan. Ms. Shaw reported the foster home is an adoptive resource. Further, there is still a high risk with the parents as they have not demonstrated behavioral changes. Mr. Mills advised the paternal grandparents are also an adoptive resource for all the minors and requested an Regulation (7) ICPC to the relatives. Court FINDS compelling reasons DO NOT exist and therefore Court ORDERED, permanency plan shall be Termination of Parental Rights and Adoption based on the circumstances. Subject minors CONTINUED under the Court's jurisdiction. Formal Supervision through the Department of Family Services. Reasonable efforts have been made. Placement to remain the same. The Department shall submit a Regulation (7) ICPC. Matter set for Review Hearing. Ms. Throne MOVED to WITHDRAW as counsel for the Brown minors due to conflict with the State. Court ORDERED, Motion to WITHDRAW is GRANTED. Matter REFERRED to the Pro Bono Attorney.

01/21/2015 3:00 PM

Parties Present  
Return to Register of Actions

1 Okay, State, call your next witness.

2 MS. BLUTH: Dr. Sandra Cetl.

3 THE MARSHAL: Sandra?

4 MS. BLUTH: Cetl, C-E-T-L.

5 THE MARSHAL: Okay.

6

7 (Off the record discussion not reported.)

8

9 DR. SANDRA CETL,

10 having been first duly sworn to tell the truth, the whole  
11 truth and nothing but the truth, testified and said as  
12 follows:

13

14 THE CLERK: Please be seated.

15 State your name and spell it for the  
16 record.

17 THE WITNESS: My name is Dr. Sandra,  
18 S-A-N-D-R-A, Cetl, C-E-T-L.

19 THE COURT: Okay.

20 MS. BLUTH: Thank you.

21

22 DIRECT EXAMINATION

23 BY MS. BLUTH:

24 Q Good morning, Dr. Cetl.

25 A Good morning.

PATSY K. SMITH, OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER  
(702) 671-3795

1 Q How are you employed?

2 A I work through Sunrise Children's Hospital  
3 and the Southern Nevada Child Assessment Center as a  
4 pediatrician that evaluates concerns of child physical  
5 abuse, child sexual abuse, and, in addition, I take a shift  
6 as an ER physician at Sunrise Children's Hospital in the  
7 Pediatric of Emergency Department.

8 Q Thank you.

9 Can you give a description of the  
10 education and training that you went through in order to  
11 obtain that position, please.

12 THE COURT: She's testified in here  
13 before. Are you willing to stipulate to her credentials or  
14 do you want her to go through it, if you want to, but she's  
15 testified in here before as an expert?

16 MS. HOJJAT: Just to clarify, she's an  
17 expert in precisely what area?

18 THE COURT: Child abuse.

19 MS. BLUTH: She's a physician and she  
20 specializes in child abuse diagnosis. It's all up to you.  
21 You can cross her or if you want to stipulate, whatever you  
22 would like.

23 MS. HOJJAT: No, that's fine.

24 THE COURT: You weren't here before, but  
25 she has been here recently testifying.

PATSY K. SMITH, OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER  
(702) 671-3795

1 MS. HOJJAT: No, that's fine.

2 THE COURT: If you want to go through it,  
3 we can. If not --

4 MS. HOJJAT: My only thing would be I did  
5 have questions about her report on child abuse, neglect and  
6 also child sex. If she is qualified in all those things,  
7 I'm fine with that.

8

9 (Off the record discussion not reported.)

10

11 THE COURT: She's testified in here about  
12 child abuse and neglect cases.

13 MS. HOJJAT: That's fine, I will  
14 stipulate.

15 THE COURT: Okay.

16 Q (BY MS. BLUTH) So let's just go right to  
17 January 9th, 2014, were you asked to do what's called staff  
18 a case with Detective Emery on that day?

19 A Yes.

20 Q Was the subject you were staffing over a  
21 child by the name of Samantha Lawrence?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Okay.

24 And I'd like to start with the face, were  
25 you shown pictures of the child's face?

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(702) 671-3795

1                   A       Yes, I did.

2                   Q       And I'm showing you what has already been  
3 put into evidence as State's 2, is that the injury you saw  
4 on the child's face?

5                   A       Yes, it is.

6                   Q       And that would be the child's left eye,  
7 correct?

8                   A       Correct.

9                   Q       And did the child have any other injuries  
10 on her face?

11                  A       Yes. She had a fading bruise on her right  
12 eye as well.

13                  Q       Okay.

14                           Now, as part of when you staff a case,  
15 what information, if any, is given to you in order for you  
16 to kind of partake in the staffing, give opinions, et  
17 cetera?

18                  A       So, first of all, injuries are very  
19 important. In order to see any injuries or concerns that  
20 there are, any medical records that are pertinent and then,  
21 additionally, a history of how an injury may have occurred.

22                  Q       Okay.

23                           So now were you given a story or more than  
24 one story in regards to how the child sustained the injury  
25 to the darker of the two eyes?

1                   A       Yes.

2                   Q       What story were you given?

3                   A       The initial history I was given was that  
4       the patient or Samantha was at a cabinet in the kitchen and  
5       had opened the cabinet into her eye and then the second  
6       history I received was that cabinet was slightly open, same  
7       cabinet, but she had, from kind of a crouching position,  
8       had stood up and that the corner of that opened cabinet had  
9       hit her in the eye.

10                  Q       Okay.

11                               So let's start with the first story, which  
12       would be that she pulled the cabinet open to her eye and  
13       caused the injury.

14                  A       Uh-huh.

15                  Q       Would you find that story consistent with  
16       the injuries you were seeing?

17                  A       No.

18                  Q       And why not?

19                  A       Because when standing at that level,  
20       pulling something towards the face, people will move and  
21       not use that amount of force that would cause this kind of  
22       bruising and so I found that to be very inconsistent with  
23       what the injuries show.

24                  Q       Okay.

25                               The second story you were given was that



1 the child stood up and that the cupboard was partially left  
2 open, so she stood up into the corner. Did you find that  
3 to be consistent with the injuries you were seeing?

4 A I thought it could be possible, you know,  
5 unlikely, but it was a possibility because she may not have  
6 seen the cabinet door coming or open.

7 Q Okay.

8 Now there was just a bruising to the eye,  
9 right? There was no like laceration or anything?

10 A That is correct.

11 Q Now if someone were to stand up into, you  
12 know, a cabinet and cut -- and catch the edge of that,  
13 would it be possible they would split their eye open if  
14 they stood up with enough force?

15 A It's possible.

16 Q Okay.

17 Now I'd like to ask you some questions.  
18 You were shown photos from Detective Emery of the child's  
19 back; is that correct?

20 A That is correct.

21 Q I'm showing you what's already in evidence  
22 as 3, 4, 5, and if you need to refer to any of those to  
23 answer any of my questions, please just let me know.

24 A Okay.

25 Q Now when you saw these pictures -- let's

PATSY K. SMITH, OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER  
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1 talk about the number of injuries. Could you count them by  
2 looking at the photos?

3 A They were too numerous to count.

4 Q Okay.

5 Did they have any -- well, let me just  
6 kind of ask a broad, open question.

7 When you saw the pictures, what did you  
8 see?

9 A So I saw multiple injuries. They were  
10 consistent with a recognizable pattern of a loop injury.  
11 So there were loop marks, as well as straight marks  
12 indicating some type of blunt force trauma with an  
13 implement.

14 The implement typically that leaves loop  
15 marks are either a cord, like a cord that's taken or some  
16 kind of belt and so I found this very concerning.

17 I also noted that some of them were  
18 already quite advanced healing and some were very fresh, I  
19 guess, and newer. So it appeared they were in different  
20 stages of healing, which is of another concern, and that  
21 they had multiple directions and kind of all over the small  
22 of her back.

23 Q So they were in different planes of the  
24 back?

25 A Yes.

PATSY K. SMITH, OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER  
(702) 671-3795

1           Q       So when something is done -- when  
2 something is in different directions, so, for instance,  
3 like you would -- let just say it was a belt, so you would  
4 have one belt mark, you know, going up the back diagonal  
5 and then another one going down, you knew this was done  
6 over and over again. Would that be fair?

7           A       Correct, yes.

8           Q       Now were you given possible stories of how  
9 the child sustained these injuries?

10          A       Yes. My understanding is that she had  
11 indicated to, I believe, an interviewer that she was  
12 climbing like a backyard fence of some sort and that she  
13 had fallen onto the springs of a trampoline that was in the  
14 backyard and I had seen pictures of the trampoline and  
15 scale.

16          Q       Did you find any of those to be consistent  
17 with the injuries you were seeing?

18          A       Absolutely not.

19          Q       Why not?

20          A       Again, recognizing the pattern loop marks  
21 inflicted the injuries. They are in all different  
22 directions. They don't fit the scale, the shape or the  
23 pattern of the springs.

24                    Again, it's not a very typical injury.  
25 There are different stages of healing, different

1 directions. There is just nothing compatible with the  
2 injuries that we could see on her back.

3 Q Were you given any other stories how the  
4 child sustained the injuries to the back?

5 A I believe I was asked if I thought it was  
6 self-inflicted, which, again, was inconsistent with the  
7 amount of force that it would take to do something like  
8 this, in addition to the patterning.

9 Q Okay.

10 Now you have stated that you also see  
11 children, you know, for treatment in the ER --

12 A Yep.

13 Q -- at Sunrise Children's Hospital?

14 A Yes.

15 Q So let's discuss if the child had been  
16 brought to you with these type of injuries, what type of  
17 treatment, while at the hospital or for home care, could  
18 you have provided that child?

19 A Well, with any types of lacerations or  
20 breaks in the skin and bruising, one priority would be pain  
21 control. So controlling pain with pain medication and/or  
22 possibly narcotic medication, like Tylenol with codeine or  
23 something like that, and I would also write a prescription  
24 for home because it's an area where she would have to sit  
25 and have contact, things like that, so pain control.

1 I do have a concern about the infection  
2 risk as well due to the breakages in the skin.

3 MS. HOJJAT: Judge, can we object as to  
4 speculation. I don't believe there is any testimony that  
5 there was evidence of breakage of the skin. I think the  
6 testimony was the opposite, there was no breakage of skin.

7 MS. BLUTH: I think she's discussing what  
8 she would have done in a situation where the child was  
9 brought in.

10 MS. HOJJAT: She specifically said  
11 breakage of the skin on this photograph.

12 MS. BLUTH: Well, I think it's up to her  
13 to opine. You can clearly see on State's 5, I mean it  
14 looks like, to me, like the skin is broken. I know what  
15 the child said earlier, but --

16 MS. HOJJAT: I'd like some foundation for  
17 why, where the breakage of the skin is coming from. Was  
18 there an actual physical observation? Did she see the  
19 person in person? Did she see the breakage of skin?

20 MS. BLUTH: I'm sure she is entitled to  
21 ask those questions on cross-examination.

22 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

23 THE COURT: Why don't you ask them now.  
24 Why don't you lay a foundation.

25 Q (BY MS. BLUTH) You did not see the child?

1 A No.

2 Q You saw photos?

3 A Correct.

4 Q And the photos are up there.

5 And you were discussing earlier the  
6 important images?

7 A Yes.

8 Q I want to talk to you -- I know you did  
9 briefly, but refresh our recollection, please.

10 A To be able to see not just the extent of  
11 the injuries or any kind of marks or whatever it is that  
12 we're looking at, also to see possible scarring, scale,  
13 sizes, things like that. It's very important to get an  
14 accurate look in lieu of an examination.

15 Q Okay.

16 Now in looking at these photos,  
17 definitively you can say that they were of different ages?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And you can say that they are on different  
20 planes?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Going opposite directions?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Different -- did I say already different  
25 stages of healing?

1 A Yes.

2 Q And that they are patterned?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Linear and looped?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Now, in those photos, did it look as  
7 though the skin had broken any parts?

8 A It appeared it could be, but I guess the  
9 skin is disrupted any time there is bruising or any marks  
10 or redness, things like that. That means there is some  
11 kind of disruption of the skin. So maybe not an averted  
12 open cut in the skin, but a disruption in the skin, yes.

13 Q When a child presents to the emergency  
14 room at Sunrise Children's Hospital where you work with,  
15 you know, an injury like this and the skin had been  
16 disrupted, how would you treat that?

17 A So pain control, as I mentioned, also  
18 infection control. Depending if and, again, not  
19 necessarily in this situation, but it depends on the  
20 vaccinations the child has, tetanus is sometimes updated  
21 for that, and then just generalized skin care to optimize  
22 the healing.

23 Q You have talked a little bit about these,  
24 these are in an area, you know, that would -- I don't know  
25 if you would say that could cause pain because when it

1 comes in contact with other areas. Explain a little bit  
2 more about that.

3 A Yep, we have clothing over those areas,  
4 then when sitting on the small of the back and the back  
5 does make contact with furniture, also, you know, all  
6 movements that we do moving the back and that skin would be  
7 kind of moving back and forth and that could cause further  
8 pain from the bruising and the injury.

9 Q Okay.

10 Did you have an opinion, in regards to  
11 specifically, you know, these injuries, how they were  
12 caused?

13 A That they were inflicted, abusive trauma.

14

15 (Off the record discussion not reported.)

16

17 MS. BLUTH: Thank you, Dr. Cetl.

18 I have no further questions. I will pass  
19 the witness.

20 THE COURT: Ms. Hojjat.

21 MS. HOJJAT: Yes, your Honor.

22

23 ///

24 ///

25 ///

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1 CROSS-EXAMINATION

2 BY MS. HOJJAT:

3 Q Good morning, Dr. Cetl.

4 A Good morning.

5 Q How are you doing?

6 A Fine. Thank you.

7 Q You've never seen the back of this person,  
8 correct?

9 A That is correct, I have not.

10 Q You are only looking at the photographs  
11 that's been entered as a State's Exhibit?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Okay.

14 You never had the opportunity to touch it?

15 A No, ma'am.

16 Q You never had the opportunity to  
17 personally observe it?

18 A No.

19 Q You never had the opportunity to do any  
20 sort of medical testing on it?

21 A I'm not sure what kind of medical testing  
22 I would do, but, no, I didn't have an opportunity to do  
23 that.

24 MS. HOJJAT: Permission to approach, your  
25 Honor, to grab the exhibits?

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1 THE COURT: Sure.

2 MS. HOJJAT: Thank you.

3 Thank you very much.

4 Q Showing you what's been marked as State's  
5 Exhibit 5.

6 A Yes.

7 Q What we can see definitively in this  
8 photograph is bruising?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And we can see redness?

11 A Yes.

12 Q You don't see any blood in this  
13 photograph?

14 A Bruising is a form of bleeding.

15 Q Okay.

16 A So I don't see, I guess, red blood  
17 spurting out of anything, no.

18 Q You don't see any open lesions on that  
19 back?

20 A It's a little hard to tell. I'm wondering  
21 about this one right here in the middle, but it's difficult  
22 to tell in the photo on that one.

23 Q Okay.

24 So looking at this, it would be purely  
25 speculation to say you are seeing anything other than

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1 bruising or redness?

2 A Right.

3 Q Now you talked about looping that you are  
4 observing in these photographs?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Looping is a professional term, correct?

7 A I suppose, yeah.

8 Q You went to medical school?

9 A Yes.

10 Q You have medical training?

11 A Yes.

12 Q How long is medical school?

13 A Four years.

14 Q Then I'm assuming you did a residency  
15 thereafter?

16 A Uh-huh, yes.

17 Q How long is that?

18 A Three years.

19 Q So fair to say you have quite a bit of  
20 experience. That's why you are qualified to sit up here  
21 today and talk about looping?

22 A Yes.

23 Q Average people don't go to med school,  
24 right?

25 A Right.

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1                   Q       People who aren't doctors don't  
2 necessarily deal with the term looping?

3                   A       Correct.

4                   Q       In fact, it probably wouldn't surprise you  
5 that the average layperson, until you explain looping to  
6 them, might not even understand what looping is?

7                   A       True.

8                   Q       So because you are a professional, when  
9 you see looping, you recognize it as a sign of abuse,  
10 correct?

11                  A       As a potential sign of abuse, yes.

12                  Q       As a potential sign of abuse.

13                           And, in fact, you were interviewed by  
14 police in this case, correct?

15                  A       Yes.

16                  Q       The police had to bring these photographs  
17 to you for you to look at them and say, I'm observing  
18 looping, I'm observing potential signs of abuse?

19                  A       Correct.

20                  Q       You were the one who had to make that  
21 call. The police couldn't, on their own, just look at the  
22 photograph and say, Oh, there's looping, this is abuse?

23                           MS. BLUTH: Objection as speculation as to  
24 what the police can do.

25                           THE COURT: All right, that will be

1       sustained.

2                   Q       (BY MS. HOJJAT)   Now you have talked  
3       about --

4                   MS. HOJJAT:   Court's indulgence.

5

6                   (Off the record discussion not reported.)

7

8                   Q       (BY MS. HOJJAT)   It doesn't surprise you  
9       that the police needed to come to you to look at the  
10      photographs and give them a medical opinion?

11                  A       When it comes to child abuse, I think the  
12      forefront of how we want to diagnosis is a complete  
13      evaluation with a multi-disciplinary team and so if there  
14      are any concerns, it is something that we all discuss as a  
15      team, whether it's in a group meeting or staffing or  
16      something like that, and so it's just a part of my  
17      medical -- my practice.

18                  Q       So you were the one who made the call that  
19      this was potential child abuse?

20                  A       Yes.

21                  Q       You were the one who made the call that  
22      this was looping, potential looping?

23                  A       That is how I described it when I saw it.  
24      I don't know if I was the only one, but...

25                  Q       Now you talked about treating --

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1 potentially treating these injuries with things for  
2 infection control?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Okay.

5 So is it your testimony that any time a  
6 child is brought to you with a bruise, you give them  
7 antibiotics?

8 A Not every single time, no.

9 Q Okay.

10 And you talked about potential pain  
11 control?

12 A Yes.

13 Q So it's your testimony that every time a  
14 child is brought to you with a bruise, you give them pain  
15 meds?

16 A With extensive bruising and depending on  
17 the patients, as well as their tolerance, but something  
18 this extensive, yes, this would require pain medication.

19 Q But not every bruise requires that pain  
20 medication, correct?

21 A No.

22 Q Again, you are a medical professional,  
23 correct?

24 A Yes.

25 Q So looking at that and seeing this level

1 of bruising requires pain medication, correct?

2 A I suppose, yes.

3 Q But it wouldn't surprise you to hear when  
4 a lot of parents see a bruise, they don't necessarily rush  
5 their kids to the ER for a bruise?

6 MS. BLUTH: Objection, relevance.

7 MS. HOJJAT: Your Honor, that's the exact  
8 same questions the State asked.

9 THE COURT: You can ask them.

10

11 Q (BY MS. HOJJAT) So it wouldn't surprise  
12 you if a lot of parents, when they see bruising, don't rush  
13 their kids to the ER?

14 A I would qualify what bruising, what extent  
15 it is. It wouldn't surprise me with minor bruising, no.

16 Q Okay.

17 And you are a doctor who treats patients,  
18 you see patients, you treat them, you diagnose them, things  
19 like that?

20 A I do.

21 Q Are you in the habit of diagnosing people  
22 without ever having seen this person or coming to you in  
23 person?

24 A When it comes to the visualization of  
25 injuries, if there is photographs or something like that,

1       then, yes, I do staffings in that case.

2                   Q       Okay.

3                            So you give medical opinions and diagnoses  
4       of people without ever talking to them, seeing the injury  
5       in person --

6                   A       Yes.

7                   Q       -- having any opportunity to manipulate  
8       the injury?

9                            MS. BLUTH: Judge, I object to diagnose  
10       people. I don't know if that's diagnose with medication,  
11       opine on injuries. I'm a little unclear on the word  
12       diagnose.

13                           THE COURT: Counsel.

14                           MS. HOJJAT: I will rephrase.

15                   Q       You make it a habit of looking at injuries  
16       and diagnosing the cause and the necessary treatments  
17       without actually seeing the person, manipulating the  
18       injury, having the opportunity to observe it in person?

19                   A       I do observe mechanisms of injuries, but I  
20       do not -- if I have not seen the child myself, I will not  
21       prescribe medications. I may prescribe X-rays or further  
22       radiology or maybe have them go see their medical provider  
23       if any tests or anything else needs to be run, but I do  
24       diagnose.

25                   Q       So do you make medical conclusions without



1 ever having seen a patient?

2 A On occasion, yes.

3

4 (Off the record discussion not reported.)

5

6 MS. HOJJAT: I'll pass the witness, your  
7 Honor.

8 THE COURT: Okay.

9 Any redirect?

10 MS. BLUTH: Just one.

11

12 REDIRECT EXAMINATION

13 BY MS. BLUTH:

14 Q Would it be concerning to you if a parent  
15 in the home did see those injuries that you mentioned in  
16 those photographs and did not get the child treatment?

17 A Yes.

18 Q Very?

19 A That would be very concerning, yes.

20 MS. HOJJAT: I do have a question based on  
21 that, your Honor.

22 THE COURT: Okay. I don't want to play  
23 ping pong in this case all day. So if you want to ask  
24 that --

25 MS. HOJJAT: No.

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1 THE COURT: -- that's fine.

2 MS. HOJJAT: I think it opened the line of  
3 questioning.

4

5 RECROSS EXAMINATION

6 BY MS. HOJJAT:

7 Q You also deal with child sex cases,  
8 correct?

9 MS. BLUTH: Objection, beyond the scope.  
10 I asked if it would be concerning as to these photos.

11 MS. HOJJAT: Your Honor, I'm going to  
12 object. I need to lay a little foundation. It's directly  
13 related to the question the State asked.

14 THE COURT: Child sex abuse, how is that  
15 relevant?

16 MS. HOJJAT: Well, the next question is  
17 when a child does have sex injuries and they are not  
18 brought in.

19 MS. BLUTH: What?

20 THE COURT: How is it relevant to this?

21 MS. HOJJAT: Pretty comparable. Injuries  
22 in a place visually not seen, that's not openly seen, is it  
23 concerning, I think that's a completely valid question.

24 THE COURT: They are not comparable. I  
25 don't find them to be comparable. So if you have a

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1 question about what she asked, you can ask, but in terms of  
2 sexual assault cases, no.

3 So if you have something related to what  
4 she said, you are welcome to ask that.

5 MS. HOJJAT: Court's indulgence.

6

7 (Off the record discussion not reported.)

8

9 Q (BY MS. HOJJAT) These injuries are  
10 located in the lower back, correct?

11 A Correct.

12 Q So you said it would be concerning if the  
13 parent saw the injuries and didn't bring the child in for  
14 treatment?

15 A Yes.

16 Q But that's predicated on the parent seeing  
17 the injuries, correct?

18 A Seeing, yes, and also if there are any  
19 changes in walking or notations of pain or anything like  
20 that. If that was noticed, then it would be concerning.

21 Q But you are purely speculating on the  
22 notations of walking and things like that occurred in this  
23 case?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Okay.

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(Off the record discussion not reported.)

MS. HOJJAT: I'll pass the witness.

MS. BLUTH: Nothing further, Judge.

THE COURT: Okay, doctor, thank you for  
testifying here today. You are free to stick around to  
find out what happens. You are free to take off at this  
point.

THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.

THE COURT: Before we go on, we have been  
going on awhile, I have got to give my court reporter a  
break so she doesn't get Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.

MS. BLUTH: That's fine.

THE COURT: We will give her a break and  
give her a couple minutes to rest, then we will come back  
out.

MS. BLUTH: Okay. I will let them know.

THE COURT: Okay.

(Off the record at 11:10 A.M. and back on  
the record at 11:15 A.M.)

THE COURT: Let's go back on the record.

We took a short recess for everybody. I

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# RED ROCK PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

6402 McLeod Drive #5 Las Vegas, Nevada 89120  
Phone: (702) 898-5311 / Fax: (702) 222-3275

## FAMILY RISK ASSESSMENT

### IDENTIFYING INFORMATION:

Name: Donald Brown  
Aliases: Don  
DOB: 03/09/1963  
Age: 51  
Social Security #: 540-84-3892  
Marital Status: Single  
Sex: Male  
Race: Caucasian  
Current Placement: 2127 Blue Zenith Circle  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89119

Family Members: Melissa Lawrence (significant other, 34 years)  
Rebecca Brown (daughter, 32 years)  
David Brown (son, 23 years)  
Samantha Lawrence (Melissa Lawrence's daughter, 16 years)

The following children are Mr. Brown and Melissa Lawrence's:  
Nikki Brown (daughter, 10 years)  
Heidi Brown (daughter, 10 years)  
Wyatt Brown (son, 5 years)

Date of Evaluation: October 29, 2014

Referral Source: Maryte Tallent, DFS

Examiner: Kelley Mann, MSW, CSW-Intern  
Melissa Webb, MSW, LCSW

### REASON FOR REFERRAL:

Donald Brown was referred by Maryte Tallent with the Department of Family Services (DFS) for a family risk evaluation, to assess his amenability to treatment, critical relapse/risk factors, and family safety issues due to allegations of child abuse.

### PROCEDURES OF EVALUATION:

1. Clinical Interview of Mr. Donald Brown, 10/28/14
2. Telephone Collateral Interview with Melissa Lawrence, 11/10/14
3. Attempted Telephone Collateral Interview with DFS Caseworker, Maryte Tallent, 11/5/14, 11/12/14, and 11/13/14.
4. Telephone Collateral Interview with DFS Supervisor, Heather Richardson, 11/17/14

Donald Brown

5. Review of Records: Referral Form, Disposition Report, 11/10/14
6. North Carolina SDM Family Risk Assessment of Child Abuse/Neglect Tool, 11/10/14

#### **INFORMED CONSENT:**

Prior to the beginning of the interview Mr. Brown was provided a full description of the rationale for the physical abuse evaluation, the evaluation process, and the risks and benefits of participation in the evaluation. Mr. Brown was aware that the interviewer would conduct a family risk evaluation as directed by DFS. Mr. Brown was cognizant that there was no confidentiality, and that his report would be generated and submitted to his DFS case worker. Mr. Brown was also advised of the importance of cooperation and honesty in order for the evaluation to be effective.

Mr. Brown stated that he understood all of the consent forms and acknowledged that he had no questions before following through with the evaluation.

#### **ABUSE AND NEGLECT ALLEGATIONS:**

The following is a summary of the presenting problem from the Clark County Department of Family Services Community Provider Referral Form dated 10/28/14:

"Samantha Lawrence came to the attention of the Department of Family Services in December 2013 after a report was received indicating that she had a black eye. An investigation ensued and Samantha was found to have whip-like marks over her back and side of her abdomen, in addition to her black eyes. Samantha reported that she hit her face on the cabinet door and that the injuries on her abdomen were from a fall on a trampoline. Mr. Brown and Ms. Lawrence made similar statements. The statements given to Child Protective Services appeared to be inconsistent with the injuries sustained by Samantha. The case was staffed at CARES with Dr. Cell who advised that Samantha's injuries were fully consistent with child abuse, and could not have been as a result of a fall on a trampoline and had not been self-inflicted. Samantha was subsequently removed from the home by CPS. The injuries included bruising and/or abrasions and/or loop marks and/or linear marks of differing stages to her back; the injuries were such that they could not have occurred without a deliberate but unreasonable act or failure to act by the person or persons responsible for the subject minor's welfare. Donald Brown physically abused the subject minor Samantha by hitting and/or striking and/or beating her with a belt and/or other object and/or his hands, resulting in injuries described above."

"Donald mentally injured the subject minor Samantha by causing her to experience extreme fear, anxiety, and emotional distress related to the ongoing physical abuse."

"The subject minors Heidi, Nikki, and Wyatt are deemed to be unsafe in the home due to the ongoing abuse of Samantha."

"Donald Brown is presumed to be an unfit caregiver for the subject minors and was convicted of Felony Manslaughter and Corporal Punishment of a Child in relation to the death of his infant child in the 1980s."

Donald Brown

"The family has a very significant history with Child Protective Services. There have been 7 reports of physical abuse in a five year time frame. Samantha has sustained injuries including bruises to her face and eyes, a broken tooth, stitches, and bruising to her abdomen."

"In March 2008, a report was received that Samantha had bruises to her face including both eyes being blackened. The family indicated that the older child, David, caused these injuries to Samantha. During the report, Samantha was observed to have make-up on her face as applied by Ms. Lawrence to cover bruising. She was 9 years old at the time."

"In November 2008, another report came in that Samantha again had bruising to her face that included finger shaped bruises and later a broken tooth. Again, Samantha had make-up on her face as applied by Ms. Lawrence."

"In December 2009, a report was received that Samantha sustained a deep cut to her wrist that she reported to the school had been caused by Mr. Brown throwing a butter knife at her. When questioned about it, Samantha changed her story and stated that she cut herself on a fence in the backyard. The reporting source stated that the story appeared to be rehearsed."

"In February 2010, a report was received that Samantha had a black eye and stitches to her eyebrow. During this report, Samantha advised she had been hit by a remote control by a younger sibling."

"In January 2011, a report was received that Samantha had a 4-5 inch round bruise to her abdomen and some marks under her eyes. Samantha reported she fell out of bed."

"In January 2012, a report was received that Samantha had been withdrawn from school and had not been re-enrolled or enrolled in home school. Concerns were expressed due to the significant history of Samantha having unexplained injuries that the school had addressed with the parents and that she was now not in school."

"In June 2014, Samantha gave a full written disclosure naming Mr. Brown as the perpetrator of the physical abuse against Samantha. The statement was a detailed disclosure and Samantha testified in criminal court. Samantha named the previously referenced incidents and advised that she had been abused since she was 4 years old."

"Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown have indicated that Samantha is severely emotionally disturbed. Despite this, Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown did not get Samantha any therapy or emotional help. Both indicate that they attempted to get her help, but reported that the therapists would not "take the case" because of CPS' prior involvement. No records have been provided and names of the providers where services were sought have not been received. Relatives have indicated that Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown have told them that Samantha injured herself throughout the years. It should be noted there have been no reports of any self-injuries since removal."

"Since the removal, Samantha has made a disclosure that Mr. Brown perpetrated the physical abuse of her throughout the years. She has made the disclosure to several people including the District Attorney, her therapist, and other collaterals. Samantha has discussed the older reports and indicated that they were not accidental injuries in the past that she sustained, but rather physical abuse perpetrated in her parents' home."

Donald Brown

### CLINICAL INTERVIEW:

Mr. Brown was interviewed at the office of Red Rock Psychological Health. He arrived on time for his scheduled appointment. Mr. Brown was dressed casually and appeared of average height and overweight. Throughout the interview Mr. Brown's mood and affect were pleasant and calm. He maintained appropriate eye contact. Mr. Brown was oriented to person, place, situation, and time. He was able to complete backward serial 7s and spelling 'world' backwards. Mr. Brown showed no active signs consistent with psychosis or thought disorder. Mr. Brown's speech was both logical and linear. Mr. Brown appears of fair-average intelligence evidenced by his vocabulary, knowledge base, and education history.

### MR. BROWN'S VERSION OF THE INCIDENT:

Mr. Brown reported to this evaluator that Samantha was late coming home from school and that she had shown up with Child Protective Services. He reported that she had a bruise on the corner of her eye and some marks on her back. At that time she had told a friend that he had punched her in the eye per Mr. Brown. Mr. Brown reported that when the bruise occurred on her eye, Mr. Brown, his twins Nikki and Heidi all witnessed it. He reported, "She was taking the dishes out of the dishwasher and the cabinet was open." He reported that when she got up to put the glasses away she hit the corner of her eye on the cabinet. He reported, "I looked at it. It was just a small mark at the beginning." He reported that she also had marks on her back. He stated, "To us it looked like scratches." He stated that she told CPS that she jumped off of the wall on to the trampoline. He reported that she told his son David's wife, Alyshia Brown, that she had done this to herself. He stated that the day before the court hearing she came out with a letter to him and made all kinds of allegations about this incident and others. He reported that in this letter she addressed the way he spoke to her, and that he had hit her with a flashlight and a frying pan.

He became tearful and stated, "We lost track of what was going on in the house. We were both working." He reported, "I've said some terrible things to Samantha and I can't believe I swatted Wyatt and the other kids and hurt them." "The last thing I want is to have them scared of me." He reported, "Samantha was lying, stealing, and I told her if she didn't stop she would end up a crack whore in North Town." He reported that looking back he couldn't believe he said this. He reported, "I did get out of hand and tried to spank her. She's too old and wouldn't listen to anything."

When asked what Mr. Brown pled in this case, he reported that he pled No Contest. When asked if he thinks the allegations are serious, Mr. Brown reported, "Very."

When asked if he had any prior involvement with CPS he reported he had 5 prior allegations, all involving Samantha. He reported that the first one occurred in 2008. He stated that Samantha wrecked on her bicycle by hitting the tire of a minivan and got a black eye. He reported that on this occasion CPS was notified by her school.

Mr. Brown reported that the second allegation was also in 2008. He reported, "The kids were bouncing on the bed like 3 little monkeys and she hit her face on something and got a bruise on her eye." He reported that her school reported this to CPS.



Donald Brown

Mr. Brown reported that the third allegation was in 2010 when Samantha had a small bruise on her wrist and forearm by jumping over the wall and had cut herself on a grate he was building for the barbecue. He stated that his son David and his friend had witnessed this. He stated that Samantha went to the bus stop and said her father stabbed her with a knife.

Mr. Brown reported that on the fourth allegation Samantha was removed from the home by CPS for 2 weeks and stayed with their neighbors and was able to return after that. He reported that on Super Bowl Sunday in 2010 Samantha was teasing Heidi and Heidi threw a Sponge Bob remote control and hit Samantha in the head causing her eyebrow to split and her tooth to chip.

On the fifth occasion she had a mark on her back and CPS had come to their house that same day and there had been no mark.

He reported that he accepts responsibilities for what has happened in his house and he admits to making mistakes, but denies all previous physical abuse.

#### **FAMILY OF ORIGIN:**

Mr. Brown stated he was born in Ellensburg, Washington to his mother, Virginia Brandt, and father, David Brown, who passed away of tongue cancer 6 years ago. He reported his mother and father divorced when he was 12 years old while they were living in Ely, Nevada. His mother remarried to Charles Brandt who passed away of Pancreatic Cancer 14 years ago. His father was remarried to Levine Brown. Levine Brown now remains as a widow. He reported that his father was a meteorologist and was working as a weatherman and was required to travel a lot due to his work. Mr. Brown reported that he could not remember all of the times that he moved around due to moving so frequently. He remembered living in the following states, but did not remember the length of time or his ages: California, Oregon, Idaho, Colorado, Arizona, and Nevada.

Mr. Brown reported that he took his GED at the age of 17 and went into the Navy. Mr. Brown reported that he lived in San Diego from the ages of 17-21. He was incarcerated in California for Voluntary Manslaughter of his 8 month old daughter from the ages of 21-26 and moved to Las Vegas, Nevada when he was released.

He reported he has 3 siblings: Rick Rogers (57), half brother who lives in Las Vegas, Rita Rennecker (56) who lives in Colorado Springs, and Brian Brown (48) who lives in Arizona.

When asked to describe his childhood, he reported, "Before the divorce we were the Leave it to Beaver family." He stated that his mother was old fashioned and was a house wife. He remembered camping, fishing, collecting pine cones for the pine nuts, and having picnics with his family. He stated that every weekend they did something together. He reported that he and his family would camp for an entire month each summer. He stated that overall he had an excellent childhood.

When asked how his relationship is now with his family members he reported, "It is very good. We were all pretty close."

Donald Brown

When asked how his relationship is now with his family members he reported, "It is very good. We were all pretty close."

When asked if he ever ran away from home, Mr. Brown reported no. When asked if he ever stole from his family members, Mr. Brown reported no. When asked if he was ever removed from his home by police or CPS, Mr. Brown reported no.

When asked how he was disciplined as a child, Mr. Brown reported, "My mother would spank us with a belt sometimes, ground us, or not allow us to have dessert." He denied any marks or bruises being left.

When asked what his relationship is like with his family members now he reported, "Excellent. I talk to my mother and my older son daily, my older daughter a few times a week, and I remain close to my younger brother and sister."

#### **ABUSE HISTORY:**

Mr. Brown denied any history of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse in his childhood.

#### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:**

When asked if he had ever been arrested for Domestic Violence he reported he had come home late after work one night, while living with his girlfriend, Doreen March, and she "flipped out." He reported that she tipped over the fish tank and left with his son. He reported that shortly after, he was picked up for a traffic violation and was arrested for Domestic Disturbance. He reported he went to jail for 8 hours and was released and never had to follow up with any classes for this.

Mr. Brown denied any other history of domestic violence in his romantic relationships or family of origin.

#### **HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION:**

Mr. Brown reported that he currently lives with his partner, Melissa Lawrence, who has been his significant other for the last 13 years. He reported that their children are in the custody of CPS and currently reside in foster care. There is currently a no contact order with his children.

#### **EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:**

Mr. Brown stated he completed the 10th grade and received his GED. When asked about the timeline of Mr. Brown's employment, he denied ever being fired from a job. The following is a job history outline:

- (47-51) 4 years Self Employed, Mason. Current Position
- (41-47) 6 years Scott Mitchell Designs, Concrete. Laid off when company moved.
- (40-41) 1 year Stuart Sandale, Concrete. Quit for a job with better pay.

Donald Brown

- (34-40) 6 years Master Craft Concrete. Quit to relocate to Las Vegas.
- (26-34) 8 years SR England, Truck driver. Quit to care for his son David.
- (21-26) 5 years Mr. Brown was incarcerated for Voluntary Manslaughter in the state of California.
- (17-21) 4 years Navy. received honorable discharge.
- (15-17) 2 years Owens and Corning. Quit to enroll in the Navy.

#### **SUBSTANCE ABUSE HISTORY:**

Mr. Brown reported his first use of alcohol was at the age of 14. He reported drinking 3-4 beers every other week currently. He reported his last use of alcohol was on September 28, 2014 for his son David Brown's 23rd birthday.

Mr. Brown reported that he started smoking marijuana at the age of 15 and his last use was in 1989 when he was incarcerated. He denied any current use. He denied ever participating in drug or alcohol evaluation or treatment.

#### **MENTAL HEALTH HISTORY:**

When asked if Mr. Brown had ever seen a therapist or psychiatrist, Mr. Brown reported he has been attending mandated therapy at Healthy Minds since September 2014 and his therapist is David Sanchez. When asked if he had ever refused mental health services, Mr. Brown denied doing so. Mr. Brown denied ever feeling suicidal or homicidal.

When Mr. Brown was asked how he would feel about taking a physical abuse boundaries class, he stated, "I already completed this class a few weeks ago at Red Rock Psychological Health."

When asked if he gets angry easily, he denied doing so. When asked if he had ever been in a physical fight as an adult, he reported that while he had been incarcerated he had been in a few physical fights. He reported he was attacked a few times when he was first incarcerated and he fought back as self-defense. He reported that no one was badly injured.

#### **CRIMINAL HISTORY:**

Mr. Brown reported he was arrested 4 different times. He was arrested in 1984 and incarcerated until 1989 for Voluntary Manslaughter. He reported that his daughter was 8 months old at the time. He reported she was acting lethargic and she had stopped breathing. He did not want to discuss this case any further and stated that he was a kid back then. He reported that he accepted a plea bargain for this case.

He was detained while living in Colorado for Disturbance of the Peace. He reported that the police had come out due to his ex-girlfriend Doreen Maren shouting at him in front of their home. He reported that he had to go to court and the charges were dropped.

He was arrested a third time for a Domestic Disturbance with his girlfriend, Doreen Maren while living in Colorado. He reported he went to jail for 8 hours and was released and never had to follow up with any classes for this.

Donald Brown

He reported the last time he was arrested was for his current case in March 2014 for 21 charges of child abuse and neglect. He reported being incarcerated from March 2014 until July 2014.

### **RELATIONSHIP HISTORY:**

Mr. Brown reported that he has been in 3 serious relationships. He was married to Jerrie Brown (28), from the ages of 18-22 and they got a divorce when he went to prison. He reported that she passed away due to heart failure at the age of 60.

He was married to his 2nd wife, Terissa Brown (21), from the ages of 28-33. He reported that she was cheating on him while he was working as a truck driver. He stated that she left with his son David and he never saw her again.

He reported that his current relationship is with Melissa Lawrence (34), whom he has been with for a total of 13.

When asked about his feelings about his current relationship he reported, "It's excellent."

### **PARENTING:**

When asked about the rules in place for the children in his home, he stated, "Nobody hits nobody, no stealing, lying, teasing, and no cursing." He stated that cursing are "daddy's words." He denied cursing at his children, but admitted that he will slip up and use foul language every once in a while. He reported that his children have a jar he has to put a quarter in if he uses these words.

When asked how his partner disciplines their children he reported, "She just sends them to their room." When asked how he disciplines their children he reported, "I usually put them in a time out against the same wall where we measure their height." He reported that the time outs are no longer than a few minutes. He reported that Samantha will get sent to her room. He reported that sometimes he would ground his children or spank his children on their butt using an open hand, but denied leaving any marks or bruises.

When asked if he or his partner had ever spanked the children he reported, "We have pretty good kids and very seldom spank them. We did when they were a lot younger." He denied him or his partner ever leaving any marks or bruises.

When asked if anyone would say he or his partner were strict parents or unfair to their children, he said, "Over protective parents probably." When asked how Ms. Lawrence is as a mother he reported, "She's excellent." When asked how he communicates with his partner he reported, "We talk."

### **FAMILY SAFETY PLAN:**

When asked what the safety plan for reunification is, Mr. Brown reported he has to complete his evaluation with Red Rock Psychological Health and is willing to follow any other recommendations. He reported that he completed the Physical Abuse Boundaries Classes at Red Rock Psy-

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chological Health a few weeks ago. He reported that he also completed the Triple P classes with Department of Family Services.

#### **COLLATERAL INTERVIEW OF MARYTE TALLENT, DFS CASEWORKER:**

This writer attempted to conduct a collateral interview with his DFS caseworker, Maryte Tallent, by telephone on November 6, 2014, November 12, 2014, and November 13, 2014 but was unsuccessful.

#### **COLLATERAL INTERVIEW OF HEATHER RICHARDSON, DFS SUPERVISOR:**

This writer conducted a collateral interview with his DFS supervisor, Heather Richardson, by telephone on November 16, 2014 for approximately 45 minutes.

Ms. Richardson reported, "Mr. Brown presents amazingly well on the outside." She reported that based on his history, she feels he is physically capable of harming Samantha. She reported that he is the parent out of the two, who demonstrates more empathy and compassion for Samantha. "The fact remains that both parents are equally responsible. Ms. Lawrence has the responsibility to be the protective parent and neither parent played a protective role for the well-being of Samantha."

She reported that when Child Protective Services first went out, the CPS caseworker did a body check and lifted Samantha's shirt and saw "loop marks" that looked like they were from a belt or an extension cord that had been held by both ends. Ms. Richardson reported that this case worker was new and did not remove Samantha from her home at this time.

A few weeks later this case was staffed with a CPS supervisor. When the supervisor saw the photographs of Samantha's injuries, she sent the new case worker back out with a senior case worker. At this time Samantha was re-interviewed and her statement was that she hit her face on the cupboard while putting away dishes. She reported that the marks on her abdomen were from the springs on the trampoline. When the supervisor reviewed the photographs again she stated that the marks were not consistent with the story Samantha gave and Samantha was removed from her home.

Ms. Richardson reported that she is the Permanency Supervisor for Child Protective Services. She reported that this case originally came through the CPS hotline in December 2013 and the removal of Samantha happened in January 2014. The other children were removed from their home a few weeks later. She reported that after she saw the photographs of Samantha's injuries and the history of Mr. Brown's case of murdering his child, she had Samantha's siblings removed from the home. She reported that because there is no disclosure of medically consistent information with the injuries involved, the three other children were left vulnerable in the home. She also had concerns of impending danger due to a non protective mother.

Ms. Richardson contacted several managers who also agreed that the 3 younger children were in impending danger if they were not removed from the home and placed into protective custody.

Ms. Richardson reported that there have been a total of 7 prior investigations within the last 5 years. She reported that every time Samantha had significant injuries the stories were not con-

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sistent with the injuries sustained. She reported that Samantha's stories were verbatim to the stories that her parents had said. Ms. Richardson reported that Samantha had been pulled out of school by Ms. Lawrence and placed into homeschool due to the school's concerns and reports that had been made to CPS. She reported that with these 7 prior allegations made, Samantha had received multiple black eyes, stitches, a broken tooth, and bruises to her abdomen.

Ms. Richardson reported that in 2010 CPS interviewed and did a formal court involved case with this family and Samantha had been placed into protective custody with a no contact order. They took her 3 younger children and sent them to Ms. Lawrence's mother's house.

She reported that there have been phone calls recorded between Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown. They both have made statements that Samantha is a problem and caused all of these injuries to herself.

Ms. Richardson reported that Samantha has been in custody for one year and hasn't injured herself other than one time while being supervised when she fell off of her bicycle. She has also had minor injuries while playing sports, but no self-inflicted injuries as reported by her parents. She reported that Samantha has been an honor roll student and has done tremendously well while in foster care.

She reported that the first 4 months while Samantha had been in foster care she kept the same story about the injuries she had incurred. In early June, CPS was notified by her therapist that Samantha had disclosed in writing the truth about her abuse. She wrote a letter to Mr. Brown stating that he had been beating her since she was 3 years old and she was tired of it all. Since this disclosure she has kept the same story.

One concern that Ms. Richardson had regarding Mr. Brown and Ms. Lawrence's belief that Samantha was severely emotionally disturbed, why did neither of them seek treatment for her.

Ms. Richardson reported that Mr. Brown has been attending mandated individual therapy at Healthy Minds since September 2014.

Ms. Richardson reported that Mr. Brown and Ms. Lawrence currently have a no contact order with their children. No physical contact or phone calls are allowed at this time.

#### **COLLATERAL INTERVIEW OF MELISSA LAWRENCE:**

This writer conducted a collateral interview with Mr. Brown's significant other, Melissa Lawrence, via telephone, on November 10, 2014.

Ms. Lawrence reported that the original investigator Yolanda Flores came to the house on December 10, 2013 and brought Samantha home from school with her. She reported, "Yolanda sat us down and said there has been a call from someone at school due to Samantha having a black eye." She reported that when Yolanda did a body inspection on Samantha, she had what looked like scratches on her back. She reported that Samantha had climbed up the block wall and scratched her back and then fell onto the trampoline. She reported that when Yolanda asked Samantha in front of them, why she didn't tell her parents about this, she reported that kids aren't supposed to be out unless her parents are with them and she didn't want to get into trouble. She

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reported that she got a phone call on January 8, 2014, from Yolanda stating she had taken Samantha into custody and she would have to follow up in court. Ms. Lawrence reported that she did not feel Mr. Brown had harmed Samantha in any way.

Ms. Lawrence stated she and Mr. Brown have been together for 13 years. She reported that she has never been married and that Mr. Brown is her only serious relationship. Ms. Lawrence stated that she has been working at the Hilton as a supervisor in sales for almost 3 years.

When asked how she felt about Mr. Brown as a father, she reported, "He's real open and the kids are always hugging him and loving him."

When asked if there are rules in place for their children in the home she reported, "There are normal rules such as no talking back and everybody should listen to what you're told to do."

When asked how she disciplines her children she reported, "Put them in time out, send them to their rooms, and take things away that they enjoy for maybe a half of a day." When asked how her partner disciplines their children she reported he disciplines the same way and also talks to the kids and explains to them what they have done wrong.

When asked how she communicates with her partner, she reported, "We sit down and talk."

Ms. Lawrence denied ever using any illegal substances in her life. She reported that she was 22 the first time she had a drink of alcohol and currently doesn't drink often. She reported that her last drink was on her son David's birthday in September 2014.

When asked if Ms. Lawrence had ever seen a therapist or psychiatrist, Ms. Lawrence reported she has been going to mandated therapy at Healthy Minds once a week since August 16, 2014. Ms. Lawrence denied ever feeling suicidal or homicidal. She denied ever refusing mental health services. When asked if she gets angry easily, she denied doing so.

Ms. Lawrence denied ever being arrested. Ms. Lawrence denied any history of domestic violence in romantic relationships or in her family of origin.

Ms. Lawrence reported she currently lives alone with Donald Brown. She stated that her children are currently at St. Jude's Ranch in the care of Jackie Wolfe. There is a no contact order and no visits are allowed with any of their children at this time.

#### **RISK ASSESSMENT:**

The following risk assessment is based upon clinical interview and review of the documentation. These assessments are made on the assumption that the allegations are true, due to the No Contest plea in order to determine risk factors to the community.

- North Carolina SDM Family Risk Assessment of Child Abuse/Neglect

The North Carolina SDM Family Risk Assessment of Child Abuse/Neglect identifies the probability that a family may continue to abuse or neglect their children. The assessment tool is based on research showing a relationship between family characteristics and outcomes of subsequent

Donald Brown

abuse and neglect cases. Since different dynamics exist in abuse and neglect situations, separate scales are used to assess abuse or neglect.

He scored a raw score of 8 out of a possible 12 related to physical abuse, which places his family in a **HIGH Risk** range to re-offend for abuse. The risk level was assigned due to:

- Current report is for both abuse and neglect
- One or more prior CPS investigative assessments (2 points)
- Prior CPS in home/out of home service history
- Age of youngest child in the home 5 or older
- Three or more children residing at the home at the time of the current report
- Child characteristics: Mental Health and/or behavioral problems
- Caretaker was a perpetrator of domestic violence prior to the last 12 months

He scored a raw score of 7 out of 16 related to neglect, which places his family in a **HIGH Risk** range for future neglect. The risk level was assigned due to:

- Current report is for both neglect and abuse
- One or more prior CPS investigative assessments (2 points)
- Prior CPS in home/out of home service history
- Three or more children residing at the home at the time of the current report
- Age of primary caretaker 30 or older (-1 point)
- Either caretaker lacks parenting skills
- Child characteristics: Mental Health and/or behavioral problems

#### **CLINICAL IMPRESSIONS:**

Due to the investigation and involvement of the legal system, this type of risk assessment assumes any person participating in this type of evaluation is guilty and therefore unable to score below a "Low Risk" rating.

The following concerns were identified during the interview:

#### **Denial of Allegations:**

Mr. Brown denies that Samantha was physically abused. He believes all her injuries were at the fault of herself or another child. Investigations and medical specialists have found injuries to be consistent with abuse.

Mr. Brown refused to discuss his Voluntary Manslaughter charges in detail during this interview.

#### **Multiple CPS/ police involvements:**

Ms. Richardson reported that there have been a total of 7 prior investigations within the last 5 years. She reported that with these 7 prior allegations made, Samantha had received multiple black eyes, stitches, a broken tooth, and bruises to her abdomen.



Donald Brown

### Criminal History:

Mr. Brown reported he was arrested 4 different times. He was arrested in 1984 and incarcerated until 1989 for Voluntary Manslaughter. He reported that his daughter was 8 months old at the time. He reported she was acting lethargic and she had stopped breathing. He did not want to discuss this case any further and stated that he was a kid back then. He reported that he accepted a Plea Bargain for this case.

He was detained while living in Colorado for Disturbance of the Peace. He reported that the police had come out due to his ex-girlfriend Doreen Maren shouting at him in front of their home. He reported that he had to go to court and the charges were dropped.

He was arrested a third time for a Domestic Disturbance with his girlfriend at the time while living in Colorado. He reported he went to jail for 8 hours and was released and never had to follow up with any classes for this.

He reported the last time he was arrested was in March, 2014 for 21 charges of child abuse and neglect. He reported being incarcerated from March 2014 until July 2014 for a total 5 months.

### Anger Management/ Impulse Control:

Due to Mr. Brown's history of Voluntary Manslaughter, spanking, fighting in prison, and being arrested on two occasions for Domestic Disturbance, it is reasonable to assume he has difficulty controlling his anger and resisting impulses.

### Inconsistent Information:

During the interview, Mr. Brown admitted to spanking his children. However during Ms. Lawrence's collateral interview she did not disclose that spanking was a discipline choice.

Mr. Brown's resiliency factors include:

- Cooperation with his evaluation.
- Employed.
- Completed Physical Abuse Boundary Classes.

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:**

The primary concern related to the cause of Samantha's injuries still remains unknown. Mr. Brown is not admitting to causing such injuries.

### **DSM-IV TR Diagnostic Impression:**

Axis I:	V61.21 Physical Abuse of a Child
Axis II:	799.9 Deferred
Axis III:	None reported
Axis IV:	Severe: Legal, Separation from Children
Axis V (current):	65

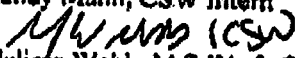
Donald Brown

Based on the information provided for his evaluation, Mr. Brown's **HIGH** risk for physical abuse/neglect recidivism and the above noted clinical impressions, the following recommendations are being made:

1. Mr. Brown should submit to a Domestic Violence Evaluation and follow all recommendations made by the evaluator.
2. Mr. Brown should attend anger management/impulse control classes and follow all recommendations made by the facilitator.
3. Mr. Brown should continue in weekly individual therapy to address his position of denial and history of criminal behaviors.
4. Mr. Brown should continue not to have contact with his children until he is meeting the requirements of his DFS case plan and his risk of abuse is decreased. He then should move to supervised visits.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Kelley Mann, CSW intern

  
Melissa Webb, M.S.W., L.C.S.W.  
Clinical Director

6402 S. McLeod #5  
Las Vegas, NV 89102  
702-898-5311  
702-222-3275 fax

# RED ROCK PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

6402 McLeod Drive #5 Las Vegas, Nevada 89120

Phone: (702) 898-5311 / Fax: (702) 222-3275

## FAMILY RISK ASSESSMENT

### IDENTIFYING INFORMATION:

Name: Melissa Lawrence  
Aliases: None  
DOB: 08/07/1980  
Age: 34  
Social Security #: 530-21-0666  
Marital Status: Single  
Sex: Female  
Race: Caucasian  
Current Placement: 2127 Blue Zenith Circle  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89119

Family Members: Donald Brown (significant other, 51 years)  
David Brown (Donald's son, 23 years)  
Samantha Lawrence (daughter with unknown, 16  
years)

The following children are Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown's:  
Nikki Brown (daughter, 10 years)  
Heidi Brown (daughter, 10 years)  
Wyatt Brown (son, 5 years)

Date of Evaluation: November 24, 2014

Referral Source: Maryte Tallent, DFS

Examiner: Kelley Mann, CSW-Intern  
Melissa Webb, MSW, LCSW

### REASON FOR REFERRAL:

Melissa Lawrence was referred by Maryte Tallent with the Department of Family Services (DFS) for a family risk evaluation, to assess her amenability to treatment, critical relapse/risk factors, and family safety issues due to allegations of child abuse.

#### Procedures of evaluation:

1. Clinical Interview of Ms. Melissa Lawrence, 11/24/14
2. Review of Records: Referral Form, Disposition Report, Order Dissolving No Contact Order, Graduate Certificates from Non-Offending Parenting Class and Triple P Class, 11/25/14
3. Collateral Interview with Donald Brown, 10/28/14
4. Collateral Interview with DFS Supervisor, Heather Richardson, 11/17/14, 12/01/14, and 12/02/14.

Melissa Lawrence

5. North Carolina SDM Family Risk Assessment of Child Abuse/Neglect Tool. 11/25/14
6. Attempted Collateral Interview with Maryte Tallent. 11/26/14, 12/01/14, and 12/02/14.

#### **INFORMED CONSENT:**

Prior to the beginning of the interview Ms. Lawrence was provided a full description of the rationale for the physical abuse evaluation, the evaluation process, and the risks and benefits of participation in the evaluation. Ms. Lawrence was aware that the interviewer would conduct a family risk evaluation as directed by DFS. Ms. Lawrence was cognizant that there was no confidentiality, and that her report would be generated and submitted to her case worker and court. Ms. Lawrence was also advised of the importance of cooperation and honesty in order for the evaluation to be effective.

Ms. Lawrence stated that she understood all of the consent forms and acknowledged that she had no questions before following through with the evaluation.

#### **ABUSE AND NEGLECT ALLEGATIONS:**

The following is a summary of the presenting problem from the Clark County Department of Family Services Community Provider Referral Form dated 10/28/14:

"Samantha Lawrence came to the attention of the Department of Family Services in December 2013 after a report was received indicating that she had a black eye. An investigation ensued and Samantha was found to have whip-like marks over her back and side of her abdomen, in addition to her black eyes. Samantha reported that she hit her face on the cabinet door and that the injuries on her abdomen were from a fall on a trampoline. Mr. Brown and Ms. Lawrence made similar statements. The statements given to Child Protective Services appeared to be inconsistent with the injuries sustained by Samantha. The case was staffed at CARES with Dr. Cctl who advised that Samantha's injuries were fully consistent with child abuse, and could not have been as a result of a fall on a trampoline and had not been self-inflicted. Samantha was subsequently removed from the home by CPS. The injuries included bruising and/or abrasions and/or loop marks and/or linear marks of differing stages to her back; the injuries were such that they could not have occurred without a deliberate but unreasonable act or failure to act by the person or persons responsible for the subject minor's welfare. Donald Brown physically abused the subject minor Samantha by hitting and/or striking and/or beating her with a belt and/or other object and/or his hands, resulting in injuries described above."

"Donald mentally injured the subject minor Samantha by causing her to experience extreme fear, anxiety, and emotional distress related to the ongoing physical abuse."

"The subject minors Heidi, Nikki, and Wyatt are deemed to be unsafe in the home due to the ongoing abuse of Samantha."

"Donald Brown is presumed to be an unfit caregiver for the subject minors and was convicted of Felony Manslaughter and Corporal Punishment of a Child in relation to the death of his infant child in the 1980s."

Melissa Lawrence

"The family has a very significant history with Child Protective Services. There have been 7 reports of physical abuse in a five year time frame. Samantha has sustained injuries including bruises to her face and eyes, a broken tooth, stitches, and bruising to her abdomen."

"In March 2008, a report was received that Samantha had bruises to her face including both eyes being blackened. The family indicated that the older child, David, caused these injuries to Samantha. During the report, Samantha was observed to have make-up on her face as applied by Ms. Lawrence to cover bruising. She was 9 years old at the time."

"In November 2008, another report came in that Samantha again had bruising to her face that included finger shaped bruises and later a broken tooth. Again, Samantha had make-up on her face as applied by Ms. Lawrence."

"In December 2009, a report was received that Samantha sustained a deep cut to her wrist that she reported to the school had been caused by Mr. Brown throwing a butter knife at her. When questioned about it, Samantha changed her story and stated that she cut herself on a fence in the backyard. The reporting source stated that the story appeared to be rehearsed."

"In February 2010, a report was received that Samantha had a black eye and stitches to her eyebrow. During this report, Samantha advised she had been hit by a remote control by a younger sibling."

"In January 2011, a report was received that Samantha had a 4-5 inch round bruise to her abdomen and some marks under her eyes. Samantha reported she fell out of bed."

"In January 2012, a report was received that Samantha had been withdrawn from school and had not been re-enrolled or enrolled in home school. Concerns were expressed due to the significant history of Samantha having unexplained injuries that the school had addressed with the parents and that she was now not in school."

"In June 2014, Samantha gave a full written disclosure naming Mr. Brown as the perpetrator of the physical abuse against Samantha. The statement was a detailed disclosure and Samantha testified in criminal court. Samantha named the previously referenced incidents and advised that she had been abused since she was 4 years old."

"Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown have indicated that Samantha is severely emotionally disturbed. Despite this, Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown did not get Samantha any therapy or emotional help. Both indicate that they attempted to get her help, but reported that the therapists would not "take the case" because of CPS' prior involvement. No records have been provided and names of the providers where services were sought have not been received. Relatives have indicated that Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown have told them that Samantha injured herself throughout the years. It should be noted there have been no reports of any self-injuries since removal."

"Since the removal, Samantha has made a disclosure that Mr. Brown perpetrated the physical abuse of her throughout the years. She has made the disclosure to several people including the District Attorney, her therapist, and other collaterals. Samantha has discussed the older reports and indicated that they were not accidental injuries in the past that she sustained, but rather physical abuse perpetrated in her parents' home."

Melissa Lawrence

### **DEFENDANT'S VERSION OF THE INCIDENT:**

Ms. Lawrence reported that the original investigator Yolanda Flores came to the house on December 10, 2013 and brought Samantha home from school with her. She reported, "Yolanda said there had been a call from someone at school due to Samantha having a black eye." She reported that when Yolanda did a body inspection on Samantha, she had what looked like scratches on her back. Ms. Lawrence explained that Samantha had climbed up the block wall and scratched her back and then fell onto the trampoline. She reported that she got a phone call on January 8, 2014, from Yolanda one month later, stating she had taken Samantha into custody and she would have to follow up in court. Ms. Lawrence reported that she did not feel Donald had harmed Samantha in any way.

Ms. Lawrence reported that her daughter Samantha was removed from their home on January 8, 2014. She reported that her 3 other children remained in her and Mr. Brown's care and were taken one week later and placed into foster care. She reported that on February 10, 2014 the children were placed with Donald Brown's son, David Brown and his wife, Alicia Brown. Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown moved out of their home until April 3, 2014 so the children and David and Alicia Brown could live there. She reported that David and Alicia decided to discontinue guardianship of the children due to CPS telling Alicia that "if she did not fully cooperate that they would open up an investigation on her and that they would take her son into protective custody." She stated that this conversation took place on March 28, 2014 in a side room at the court with 5 CPS case workers present.

Ms. Lawrence reported that on April 3, 2014 the children were placed at Child Haven. She stated that on May 5, 2014 all of the children were then placed at St. Jude's Ranch and have remained there since.

When asked what Ms. Lawrence pled in this case, she reported that she pled No Contest. When asked if she thinks the allegations are serious, Ms. Lawrence reported, "To a point, yes." She reported that she originally had 7 charges and they were dropped to 2 charges. Ms. Lawrence reported the current allegations are Child Abuse and Neglect with Mental Harm.

When asked if she had any prior involvement with CPS she reported there have been a total of 7 prior allegations, all involving Samantha. She reported that 6 of the previous reports were unsubstantiated. She stated she was at work at the time of the incidents. She reported that she had been working 6 days a week from 7am to 7pm.

The first allegation occurred in 2008. She stated that Samantha and David were playing outside and David was on his electric scooter and Samantha was on her bicycle and they had crashed into one another causing her to wreck on her bicycle. She stated the black eye was not from abuse, but rather from Samantha hitting her head on a minivan tire.

Ms. Lawrence reported that she agreed with Mr. Brown's statement that the second allegation was also in 2008. He reported that "The kids were bouncing on the bed like 3 little monkeys and she hit her face on something and got a bruise on her eye."

Melissa Lawrence

She reported that the third allegation was in 2010 when Samantha had a small bruise on her wrist and forearm by jumping over the wall and had cut herself on a grate Mr. Brown was building for the barbecue. She stated that Mr. Brown's son David and his friend had witnessed this. She stated that Samantha went to the bus stop and said her father stabbed her with a knife. Ms. Lawrence reported that Samantha recanted and admitted she had lied regarding the allegations she had made during this incident.

Ms. Lawrence reported that she agreed with Mr. Brown's statement regarding the 4<sup>th</sup> incident; that on Super Bowl Sunday in 2010 Samantha was teasing Heidi and Heidi threw a Sponge Bob remote control and hit Samantha in the head causing her eyebrow to split and her tooth to chip. She reported that at the time of this incident Mr. Brown was not in the home. She reported that she had been home with Mr. Brown's son David. She reported that Samantha was removed from the home by CPS for 2 weeks and placed with their neighbors and was able to return after that. She reported feeling upset by this because no background check was ever done on her neighbors.

Mr. Brown reported that on the fifth occasion Samantha had a mark on her back and CPS had come to their house that same day and there had been no mark. Ms. Lawrence reported that she had no recollection of this happening.

She reported that there has always been a witness present during the time each allegation that was made. Ms. Lawrence reported that Samantha recanted on 3 of the allegations she had made.

Ms. Lawrence reported that her next court date is in February 2016 and that she has a trial date set sometime in 2016.

#### **CLINICAL INTERVIEW:**

Ms. Lawrence was interviewed at the office of Red Rock Psychological Health. She arrived on time for her scheduled appointment. Ms. Lawrence was dressed casually and appeared of average height and weight. Throughout the interview Ms. Lawrence's mood and affect were tense and flat. She leaned forward on the side of the couch for the entirety of the interview. She maintained appropriate eye contact. Ms. Lawrence was oriented to person, place, situation, and time. She was able to complete backward serial 7s and spelling 'world' backwards. Ms. Lawrence showed no active signs consistent with psychosis or thought disorder. Ms. Lawrence's speech was both logical and linear. Ms. Lawrence appears of fair-average intelligence evidenced by her vocabulary, knowledge base, and education history.

#### **FAMILY OF ORIGIN:**

Ms. Lawrence stated she was born in Mesquite, Texas to her mother, Sandra Lawrence, and her father, Harold Lawrence. She reported living in Texas until the age of 7. At the age of 3 weeks, she reported her mother and father got a divorce and she did not know the reason for this. She reported that her mother never remarried. She reported that her father remarried Diane Lawrence and they have been together for a total of 33 years. Ms. Lawrence reported she was raised mainly in Las Vegas by her mother. She reported that her father was still a big part of her life. She stated that her mother and stepmother got along well. She reported that they all spent time together even though her parents got a divorce.

Melissa Lawrence

When asked to describe her childhood, she reported, "I always had a lot of friends and was focused and involved in school." She reported that she always wanted to get good grades. She reported that she always took vacations on the California coastline. She reported that her siblings, stepmother, father, and mother often went on camping trips together. She remembered fishing and playing horseshoes with her family. She reported that overall she had an "excellent childhood."

When asked about her relationship with her family while growing up, Ms. Lawrence stated "It was very good. We were all very close." She reported that she felt the same way towards her siblings and reported, "We always got along with one another." She reported having one half sister, Jennifer Lawrence (30) who currently lives in Mesquite, Texas and one half brother, Jason Lawrence (28), who also currently lives in Mesquite, Texas.

When asked if she ever ran away from home, Ms. Lawrence reported no. When asked if she ever stole from her family members, Ms. Lawrence reported no. When asked if she was ever removed from her home by police or CPS, Ms. Lawrence reported no.

When asked how she was disciplined as a child, Ms. Lawrence reported that she was grounded when she did get into trouble, but she was "always too busy with my nose in a book." Ms. Lawrence reported that her mom and dad "popped her" on the butt at times. She reported that this was on top of her clothing and denied any marks or bruises being left on her. Ms. Lawrence denied being emotionally abused or neglected from her parents.

When asked about her relationship with her family now, she reported, "I talk to my mom and dad twice a day. I talk to my stepmother twice a week and I still have a good relationship with my siblings."

#### **ABUSE HISTORY:**

Ms. Lawrence denied any history of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse in her childhood.

#### **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:**

Ms. Lawrence denied any history of domestic violence in romantic relationships or in her family of origin.

#### **HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION:**

Ms. Lawrence reported she currently lives alone with Donald Brown. She stated that her children are currently at St. Jude's Ranch in the care of Jackie Wolfe. She reported that there was a No Contact Order and she had this lifted by the court. Ms. Lawrence provided this interviewer with the court documentation demonstrating this during this interview. She reported that she still has not been allowed to have any communication or visitations with any of her children at this time due to recommendations from her case supervisor Heather Richardson.

When asked why her mother Sandra Lawrence was not able to provide guardianship for her children she stated her mother did not qualify. Ms. Lawrence reported that CPS wanted proof that Sandra Lawrence was Ms. Lawrence's maternal mother. She reported that they requested



Melissa Lawrence

her social security number over the telephone and she refused. Her mother said she would provide this information while in person. She reported that her mother had a confrontation with DFS Supervisor, Heather Richardson.

Ms. Lawrence reported that on April 4, 2014 Heather Richardson and Marytc Tallent sat down with her mother and told her "if she ever wanted to redeem herself as a mother she would need to sit me down and tell me what a piece of scum I was."

Ms. Lawrence reported that while Samantha was in the care of Jackie Wolfe she had an accident on her bicycle causing her to have stitches in her vagina. She reported that on the night of September 27, 2014 she was in San Diego with Mr. Brown for their son David's birthday. She reported that David received a phone call from Ms. Wolfe around 11 pm and asked him if he knew where his parents were. At that time Ms. Lawrence got on the phone with Ms. Wolfe and she told her that Samantha had been in a bicycle accident and landed on the bar by the seat. Ms. Lawrence reported that Ms. Wolfe stated that she shouldn't have even had Samantha outside riding her bicycle because it was flooding.

"When the accident first happened Ms. Wolfe took Samantha to the Boulder City Emergency Room for bruising and scratches. Later on that night Samantha was complaining that it hurt to go to the bathroom and she was bleeding. Ms. Wolfe took Samantha back to the Boulder City Emergency Room and they were unsure if the blood was coming from her urethra or clitoris. They also found lacerations on her vagina." Ms. Lawrence reported that Samantha had to be transported to Sunrise Hospital Pediatric Unit due to the extent of the injuries caused. Ms. Lawrence stated that on the next day David Brown called Ms. Wolfe to see how Samantha was doing and she was still hospitalized.

Ms. Lawrence reported that she was never contacted by CPS about this accident. When Ms. Lawrence spoke with her case supervisor Ms. Richardson about how Samantha was doing. Ms. Richardson told Ms. Lawrence, "Don't think you can use this against us, because Samantha is a child and children have accidents all of the time and this is nothing more than a minor accident."

Ms. Lawrence refused to disclose who the biological father of Samantha was to this interviewer.

#### **EDUCATION HISTORY:**

Ms. Lawrence stated she completed high school. She reported she received her Associates Degree in Accounting. Ms. Lawrence reported she attended vocational schooling for drafting and reading blue prints. She also stated she is a Master Graduate from Rapport National Leadership in Las Vegas, Nevada.

#### **EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:**

When asked about the timeline of Ms. Lawrence's employment, she stated she had never been fired from any of her jobs. The following is a job history outline:

- Current (31-34) Hilton, Supervisor in Sales.
- 5 years (25-31) BW Credit Union, Branch Manager. Branch was closed.

Melissa Lawrence

- 4 years (23-25) American Sand and Gravel, Account Manager. Left to be a stay at home mother.

#### **SUBSTANCE ABUSE HISTORY:**

Ms. Lawrence denied ever using any illegal substances in her life. She reported that she was 22 the first time she had a drink and currently doesn't drink often. She reported that her last drink was on her son David's birthday in September 2014. She denied any history of DUI or arrests.

#### **MENTAL HEALTH HISTORY:**

When asked if Ms. Lawrence had ever seen a therapist or psychiatrist, Ms. Lawrence reported she has been going to mandated therapy at Healthy Minds once a week since August 16, 2014. Ms. Lawrence denied ever feeling suicidal or homicidal. She denied ever refusing mental health services. When asked if she gets angry easily, she denied doing so. She reported she is not currently satisfied with her treatment.

#### **CRIMINAL HISTORY:**

Ms. Lawrence denied having a legal history. When asked if her partner has a criminal history she reported that in 1983 or 1984 he was convicted of Voluntary Manslaughter. She stated that he was married to his 1st wife, Jerri Brown at the time. She reported that Mr. Brown was in the Navy at the time and was on land for 3 days. She stated that his daughter Amanda wasn't breathing and that Mr. Brown called to get her to the hospital. She stated that he was interrogated for 28 hours and that the District Attorney told him they would take his other daughter Becky. She stated he admitted to killing his daughter Amanda to save his wife and his daughter Becky, and he was sent to prison for 5 years. She reported that his wife Jerri Brown divorced Mr. Brown while he was incarcerated. She reported that Jerri Brown passed away a few years ago.

#### **RELATIONSHIP:**

Ms. Lawrence (34), stated she has been together with Donald Brown (51) for a total of 12 years. She reported that she has never been married and that Donald is her only serious relationship. She reported that they met while trick or treating on Halloween in 2002. They moved in together 4 months later.

#### **PARENTING:**

When asked if there are rules in place for their children in the home she reported, "There are normal rules such as no talking back and everybody should listen to what you're told to do."

When asked how she or her partner disciplines their children she reported, "I send them to their room, put them in a time out, or whatever their special thing is that they like I will take it away for half of the day or longer depending on what they did." When asked how her partner disciplines their children she reported he puts them in a time out or he will take away dessert for that night.

Melissa Lawrence

When asked if she or her partner ever spanked the children she reported that they both have spanked their children on the butt on top of their clothing in the past, but denied ever leaving any marks or bruises.

When asked if anyone would say that she is a strict parent she reported, "Maybe some people would say that I'm overprotective with my children." She reported that if any of her children go to someone's house she expects to meet the parents and see where they live and what exactly is going on in their household.

When asked if anyone would say that she or her partner are unfair or unreasonable to their children she reported her rules are "no make-up, no skinny jeans, and no crop tops." She reported that she is a firm believer that when her children are using any electronics that they need to be monitored.

When asked how she felt about Mr. Brown as a father, she reported, "He's good. The kids love and adore him. They spend a lot more time with him than myself, because I work a lot."

When asked how she communicates with her partner, she reported, "We talk a lot."

#### **FAMILY SAFETY PLAN:**

Ms. Lawrence reported she does not have a safety plan at this time. She reported she has completed the Non Offending Parenting Classes at Red Rock Psychological Health and the Triple P Parenting Classes in September, 2014.

#### **COLLATERAL INTERVIEW OF HEATHER RICHARDSON, DFS SUPERVISOR:**

This writer conducted a collateral interview with his DFS supervisor, Heather Richardson, by telephone on November 16, 2014 for approximately 45 minutes, December 1, 2014 for approximately 20 minutes, and December 2, 2014 for approximately 30 minutes.

Ms. Richardson reported, "Mr. Brown presents amazingly well on the outside." She reported that based on his history, she feels he is physically capable of harming Samantha. She reported that Ms. Lawrence demonstrates zero empathy, which is concerning. "The fact remains that both parents are equally responsible. Ms. Lawrence has the responsibility to be the protective parent and neither parent played a protective role for the well-being of Samantha."

She reported that when Child Protective Services first went out, the CPS caseworker was new. She did a body check and lifted Samantha's shirt and saw "loop marks" that looked like they were from a belt or an extension cord that had been held by both ends. Ms. Richardson reported that this case worker was new and did not remove Samantha from her home at this time.

A few weeks later this case was staffed with a CPS supervisor. When the supervisor saw the photographs of Samantha's injuries, she sent the new case worker back out with a senior case worker. At this time Samantha was re-interviewed and her statement was that she hit her face on the cupboard while putting away dishes. She reported that the marks on her abdomen were from the springs on the trampoline. When the supervisor reviewed the photographs again she stated

Melissa Lawrence

that the marks were not consistent with the story Samantha gave and Samantha was removed from her home.

Ms. Richardson reported that she is the Permanency Supervisor for Child Protective Services. She reported that this case originally came through the CPS hotline in December 2013 and the removal of Samantha happened in January 2014. The other children were removed from their home a few weeks later. She reported that after she saw the photographs of Samantha's injuries and the history of Mr. Brown's case of murdering his child, she had Samantha's siblings removed from the home. She reported that as a Permanency Supervisor and there being no disclosure of medically consistent information with the injuries involved, the three other children were left vulnerable in the home. She also had concerns of impending danger due to a non protective mother.

Ms. Richardson contacted several managers who also agreed that the 3 younger children were in impending danger if they were not removed from the home and placed into protective custody.

Ms. Richardson reported that there have been a total of 7 prior investigations within the last 5 years. She reported that every time Samantha had significant injuries the stories were not consistent with the injuries sustained. She reported that Samantha's stories were verbatim to the stories that her parents had said. Ms. Richardson reported that Samantha had been pulled out of school by Ms. Lawrence and placed into homeschool due to the school's concerns and reports that had been made to CPS. She reported that with these 7 prior allegations made, Samantha had received multiple black eyes, stitches, a broken tooth, and bruises to her abdomen.

Ms. Richardson reported that in 2010 CPS interviewed and did a formal court involved case with this family and Samantha had been placed into protective custody with a no contact order. They took her 3 younger children and sent them to Ms. Lawrence's mother's house. They filed a petition with the court and the case made it to trial. Ms. Lawrence got an attorney and the case was eventually dropped.

Ms. Richardson reported that Ms. Lawrence has zero empathy for Samantha and has made horrible statements about her. She reported that there have been phone calls recorded between Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown. They both have made statements that Samantha is a problem and caused all of these injuries to herself.

Ms. Richardson reported that Samantha has been in custody for one year and hasn't injured herself other than one time while being supervised when she fell off of her bicycle. She has also had minor injuries while playing sports, but no self-inflicted injuries as reported by her parents. She reported that Samantha has been an honorable student and has done tremendously well while in foster care.

She reported that the first 4 months while Samantha had been in foster care she kept the same story about the injuries she had incurred. In early June, CPS was notified by her therapist that Samantha had disclosed in writing alternate info about her abuse. She wrote a very strong letter to Mr. Brown stating that he had been beating her since she was 4 years old and she was tired of it all. Per Ms. Richardson, since this disclosure she has kept the same story.

Melissa Lawrence

According to Ms. Richardson, Ms. Lawrence has no parental bond with Samantha and shows hatred towards her.

Ms. Richardson reported that she feels Ms. Lawrence was present all along or may have been the parent that struck Samantha. She feels they may all be protecting Ms. Lawrence. Ms. Richardson reported that their 5 year old son Wyatt, reported that when his "mommy gets drunk she hits other people."

One of the biggest questions that Ms. Richardson posed to Mr. Brown and Ms. Lawrence was if they believed she was severely emotionally disturbed, why did neither of them seek treatment for her. Ms. Richardson reported that Mr. Brown and Ms. Lawrence have been attending mandated individual therapy at Healthy Minds since September 2014.

Ms. Richardson reported that Mr. Brown and Ms. Lawrence currently have a no contact order with their children. No physical contact or phone calls are allowed at this time.

#### **COLLATERAL INTERVIEW OF MARYTE TALLENT, DFS CASEWORKER:**

This writer attempted a collateral interview with her DFS caseworker, Maryte Tallent, by telephone on November 26, 2014, December 1, 2014, and December 2, 2014 but was unsuccessful.

#### **COLLATERAL INFORMATION OF DONALD BROWN:**

Mr. Brown reported to this interviewer that Samantha was late coming home from school and that she had shown up with Child Protective Services. He reported that she had a bruise on the corner of her eye and some marks on her back. At that time she had told a friend that he had punched her in the eye per Mr. Brown. Mr. Brown reported that when the bruise occurred on her eye, Mr. Brown, his twins Nikki and Heidi all witnessed it. He reported, "She was taking the dishes out of the dishwasher and the cabinet was open." He reported that when she got up to put the glasses away she hit the corner of her eye on the cabinet. He reported, "I looked at it. It was just a small mark at the beginning." He reported that she also had marks on her back. He stated, "To us it looked like scratches." He stated that she told CPS that she jumped off of the wall on to the trampoline. He reported that she told his son David's wife, Alyshia Brown, that she had done this to herself. He stated that the day before the court hearing she came out with a letter to him and made all kinds of allegations about this incident and others. He reported that in this letter she addressed the way he spoke to her, and that he had hit her with a flashlight and a frying pan.

He became tearful and stated, "We lost track of what was going on in the house. We were both working." He reported, "I've said some terrible things to Samantha and I can't believe I swatted Wyatt and the other kids and hurt them." "The last thing I want is to have them scared of me." He reported, "Samantha was lying, stealing, and I told her if she didn't stop she would end up a crack whore in North Town." He reported that looking back he couldn't believe he said this. He reported, "I did get out of hand and tried to spank her. She's too old and wouldn't listen to anything."

Melissa Lawrence

When asked what Mr. Brown pled in this case, he reported that he pled No Contest. When asked if he thinks the allegations are serious, Mr. Brown reported, "Very."

Mr. Brown reported that he has been self employed for the last 4 years doing Mason work.

Mr. Brown reported that he currently lives with his partner, Melissa Lawrence, who has been his significant other for the last 13 years. He reported that their children are in the custody of CPS and currently reside in foster care.

Mr. Brown denied any history of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse in his childhood.

Mr. Brown reported his first use of alcohol was at the age of 14. He reported drinking 3-4 beers every other week currently. He reported his last use of alcohol was on September 28, 2014 for his son David Brown's 23rd birthday. Mr. Brown reported that he started smoking marijuana at the age of 15 and his last use was in 1989 when he was incarcerated. He denied any current use. He denied ever participating in drug or alcohol evaluation or treatment.

When asked if Mr. Brown had ever seen a therapist or psychiatrist, Mr. Brown reported he has been attending mandated therapy at Healthy Minds since September 2014 and his therapist is David Sanchez. When asked if he had ever refused mental health services, Mr. Brown denied doing so. Mr. Brown denied ever feeling suicidal or homicidal.

When Mr. Brown was asked how he would feel about taking a Physical Abuse Boundaries Class, he stated, "I already completed this class a few weeks ago at Red Rock Psychological Health."

When asked if he gets angry easily, he denied doing so. When asked if he had ever been in a physical fight as an adult, he reported that while he had been incarcerated he had been in a few physical fights. He reported he was attacked a few times when he was first incarcerated and he fought back as self-defense. He reported that no one was badly injured.

Mr. Brown reported he was arrested 4 different times. He was arrested in 1984 and incarcerated until 1989 for Voluntary Manslaughter. He reported that his daughter was 8 months old at the time. He reported she was acting lethargic and she had stopped breathing. He did not want to discuss this case any further and stated that he was a kid back then. He reported that he accepted a plea bargain for this case.

He was detained while living in Colorado for Disturbance of the Peace. He reported that the police had come out due to his ex-girlfriend Doren Maren shouting at him in front of their home. He reported that he had to go to court and the charges were dropped.

He was arrested again for a Domestic Disturbance with his girlfriend, Doren Maren while living in Colorado. He reported he went to jail for 8 hours and was released and never had to follow up with any classes for this.

He reported the last time he was arrested was for his current case in March 2014 for 21 charges of child abuse and neglect. He reported being incarcerated from March 2014 until July 2014.

Melissa Lawrence

When asked if he had ever been arrested for Domestic Violence he reported he had come home late after work one night, while living with his girlfriend, Doreen Maren, and she "flipped out." He reported that she tipped over the fish tank and left with his son. He reported that shortly after, he was picked up for a traffic violation and was arrested for Domestic Disturbance. He reported he went to jail for 8 hours and was released and never had to follow up with any classes for this. Mr. Brown denied any other history of domestic violence in his romantic relationships or family of origin.

Mr. Brown reported that he has been in 3 serious relationships. He was married to Jerrie Brown (28), from the ages of 18-22 and they got a divorce when he went to prison. He reported that she passed away due to heart failure at the age of 60.

He was married to his 2nd wife, Terissa Brown (21), from the ages of 28-33. He reported that she was cheating on him while he was working as a truck driver. He stated that she left with his son he never saw her again. He reported that he raised his son David after Terissa Brown left him.

He reported that his current relationship is with Melissa Lawrence (34), whom he has been with for a total of 13 years. When asked about his feelings about his current relationship he reported, "It's excellent."

When asked about the rules in place for the children in his home, he stated, "Nobody hits nobody, no stealing, lying, teasing, and no cursing." He stated that cursing are "daddy's words." He denied cursing at his children, but admitted that he will slip up and use foul language every once in a while. He reported that his children have a jar he has to put a quarter in if he uses these words.

When asked how his partner disciplines their children he reported, "She just sends them to their room." When asked how he disciplines their children he reported, "I usually put them in a time out against the same wall where we measure their height." He reported that the time outs are no longer than a few minutes. He reported that Samantha will get sent to her room. He reported that sometimes he would ground his children or spank his children on their butt using an open hand, but denied leaving any marks or bruises.

When asked if he or his partner had ever spanked the children he reported, "We have pretty good kids and very seldom spank them. We did when they were a lot younger." He denied him or his partner ever leaving any marks or bruises.

When asked if anyone would say he or his partner were strict parents or unfair to their children, he said, "Over protective parents probably." When asked how Ms. Lawrence is as a mother he reported, "She's excellent." When asked how he communicates with his partner he reported, "We talk."

#### **RISK ASSESSMENT:**

The following risk assessment is based upon clinical interview and review of the documentation. These assessments are made on the assumption that the allegations are true, due to the No Contest plea in order to determine risk factors to the community.

Melissa Lawrence

• North Carolina SDM Family Risk Assessment of Child Abuse/Neglect

The North Carolina SDM Family Risk Assessment of Child Abuse/Neglect identifies the probability that a family may continue to abuse or neglect their children. The assessment tool is based on research showing a relationship between family characteristics and outcomes of subsequent abuse and neglect cases. Since different dynamics exist in abuse and neglect situations, separate scales are used to assess abuse or neglect.

She scored a raw score of 8 out of a possible 12 related to physical abuse, which places her family in a **HIGH Risk** range to re-offend for abuse. The risk level was assigned due to:

- Current report is for both abuse and neglect
- One or more prior CPS investigative assessments
- Prior CPS in home/out of home service history
- Age of youngest child in the home 5 or older
- Three or more children residing at the home at the time of the current report
- Child characteristics: Mental Health and/or behavioral problems
- Either caretaker was a perpetrator of domestic violence prior to the last 12 months

She scored a raw score of 7 out of 16 related to neglect, which places her family in a **HIGH Risk** range for future neglect. The risk level was assigned due to:

- Current report is for both neglect and abuse
- One or more prior CPS investigative assessments
- Prior CPS in home/out of home service history
- Three or more children residing at the home at the time of the current report
- Age of primary caretaker 30 or older (-1 point)
- Either caretaker lacks parenting skills
- Child characteristics: Mental Health and/or behavioral problems

**CLINICAL IMPRESSIONS:**

Due to the investigation and involvement of the legal system, this type of risk assessment assumes any person participating in this type of evaluation is guilty and therefore unable to score below a "Low Risk" rating.

The following concern was identified during the interview:

**Denial of Allegations:**

Both Ms. Lawrence and Mr. Brown deny that Samantha was physically abused. They believe all her injuries were at the fault of herself or another child. Investigations have found injuries to be consistent with abuse.



Melissa Lawrence

Ms. Lawrence is also in denial that her partner killed his previous child, even though he was convicted and served a prison sentence.

**Multiple CPS/police involvements:**

Ms. Richardson reported that there have been a total of 7 prior investigations within the last 5 years. She reported that with these 7 prior allegations made, Samantha had received multiple black eyes, stitches, a broken tooth, and bruises to her abdomen.

**Inconsistent Information:**

During Mr. Brown's collateral interview, he admitted to being emotionally abusive to Samantha. "I've said some terrible things to Samantha." He admitted that the children are afraid of him as well. Ms. Brown denied to this interviewer that he was emotionally abusive to the children.

Ms. Lawrence refused to disclose the father of Samantha to this interviewer.

Ms. Lawrence's resiliency factors include:

- Cooperation with her evaluation.
- Employed.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:**

Ms. Lawrence denies that her or her partner have abused their children; therefore, without a polygraph examination on all caregivers to provide clarity in the case, recommendations are limited.

**DSM-IV TR Diagnostic Impression:**

Axis I:	V61.21 Physical Abuse and Neglect of a Child
Axis II:	799.9 Deferred
Axis III:	None
Axis IV:	Severe: Legal, Separation from Child
Axis V (current):	65

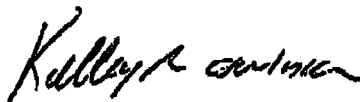
Based on the information provided for her evaluation, Ms. Lawrence's HIGH risk for physical abuse/neglect recidivism and the above noted clinical impressions, the following recommendations are being made.

1. Ms. Lawrence should continue in weekly individual therapy to address her position of denial.
2. Ms. Lawrence should create a therapeutic safety plan with the help of a trauma therapist to identify triggers, coping skills, and relapse prevention.
3. Ms. Lawrence should continue not to have contact with her children until she is meeting the requirements of her DFS case plan and her risk of abuse is decreased. She then should move to supervised visits.

Melissa Lawrence

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelley Mann, CSW intern



Melissa Webb, M.S.W., L.C.S.W.  
Clinical Director



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# ABC THERAPY

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## COMPLETION REPORT

Tuesday, March 31, 2015

**CLIENT:** Lawrence, Melissa D  
**COURT:** Department of Family Services NV  
**ATTN:** Maryte Tallent  
**CASE NUMBER** 1345085  
**BIRTHDATE:** 8/7/1980  
**SSN:** 530-21-0666  
**INTAKE DATE:** 2/10/2015  
**DISCHARGE:** 3/31/2015  
**PROGRAM:** Mental Health

Sessions: 10 Absences: 0  
 Attended: 10 Makeups: 0  
 Remaining: 0

**BALANCE DUE:** [\$0.00]

**STATUS:** Completed: Client has successfully completed the program and made all payments.

**COMMENTS:** Ms. Lawrence learned undergo gradually to a repeated imaginal exposure to the feared negative consequences predicted by worries of her children wellbeing and develop alternative reality-based predictions.  
 This client has learned the skills taught and has demonstrated emotional growth.

**Signature:**

*William Gallego, MS, LCI 00128, Certified Domestic Violence Counselor*  
 Input By: NY

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Email: abc2@lvccomail.com Website: ABCTherapy.net FAX: 702-568-5974

**COMPLETION REPORT**

Tuesday, March 31, 2015

**CLIENT:** Brown, Donald E  
**COURT:** Department of Family Services NV  
**ATTN:** Maryte Tallent  
**CASE NUMBER** 1345085  
**BIRTHDATE:** 3/9/1963  
**SSN:** 540-84-3892  
**INTAKE DATE:** 2/10/2015  
**DISCHARGE:** 3/31/2015  
**PROGRAM:** Mental Health

Sessions: 10 Absences: 0  
Attended: 10 Makeups: 0  
Remaining: 0

**BALANCE DUE:** [\$0.00]

**STATUS:** Completed: Client has successfully completed the program and made all payments.

**COMMENTS:** Mr. Brown learned to identify challenge, and replace biased, fearful self-talk with positive, realistic, and empowering self-talk. In addition Mr. Brown learned and implemented problem-solving strategies for realistically addressing worries.  
This client has learned the skills taught and has demonstrated emotional growth.

**Signature:**  
William Gallego, MS, LCI 00129, Certified Domestic Violence Counselor

Input By: NY

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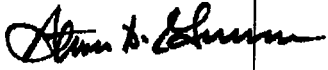
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CLARK COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES  
121 SOUTH MARTIN LUTHER KING BLVD.  
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA 89106  
(702) 455-7200



CLERK OF THE COURT

**EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT  
FAMILY DIVISION - JUVENILE  
CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA**

In the Matter of:

**SAMANTHA LAWRENCE**  
Date of Birth: 07-06-1998  
A Minor 17 years, 00 Months of Age

COURT CASE NO.: J-14-319202-P2  
DEPT.: FAMILY JUVENILE

**HEIDI BROWN**  
Date of Birth: 01-04-2004  
A Minor 11 years, 06 Months of Age

**NIKKI BROWN**  
Date of Birth: 01-04-2004  
A Minor 11 years, 06 Months of Age

**WYATT BROWN**  
Date of Birth: 05-30-2009  
A Minor 06 years, 01 Months of Age

**REPORT FOR PERMANENCY AND PLACEMENT REVIEW**

Date of Hearing: 07-22-2015

Time of Hearing: 10:00 AM

Courtroom: HM GIBSON - #20

Attachment: A. Domestic violence assessment report  
for Mr. Brown  
B. Domestic Violence report for Mr.  
Brown  
C. Mental Health report for Mr. Brown  
D. Mental Health evaluation results for  
Ms. Lawrence  
E. Mental Health report for Ms. Lawrence