

Send this summary to the Big Spring State Hosp. Social Services
Division
Ref. @ Mrs. Charles Burton

At present our dept. is involved in a child abuse case ~~involving~~ involving a Mr and Mrs. Charles Burton and their two children Vivian Lee (9-3-69) and Charles Lee (9-12-70). The following is a ^{brief summary of our} case with this family.

Mr. Charles Burton was born 5-16-46 and he & his wife ~~had~~ moved to Odessa ~~only~~ only a short while previous to the occurrence of this abuse incident. Mr. Burton had just been discharged from the army ^{where he spent 3 years} and ~~had~~ moved his family to Odessa to live with some relatives and try to find employment. On 11-7-70, the date the abuse incident occurred, the Burtons were living in an apartment, which they were thrown out of, and Mr. Burton was unemployed.

Mrs. Joan Elaine Burton, born 1-29-51, was supposedly alone when Charles Lee Burton Jr. received a head injury causing a skull fracture from the front to the rear of his head. Mr. Burton had been out getting a hair cut and when he returned the child was taken to the hospital.

At the hospital the Burtons first claimed the child had been sick. A nurse testified that during this first contact with the family they attempted to leave the hospital twice. The nurses had to insist they stay.

At this time they stated the ~~chief~~ ^{doctors} when they were confronted with ~~the~~ ^{the} seriousness of the injury, they ~~so~~ stated the little girl

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that Vivian, their small daughter, had hit Charles on the head with a baby bottle. This story changed several times during the next couple of days finally ending up that Mrs. Burton had been holding the child near his crib. As she turned to go into another room, Vivian got in the way - as she stooped to move Vivian, she accidentally hit ~~the~~ ^{Charles's} head on a dresser. The child was bruised ~~at~~ ^{on} his legs, ~~and~~ arms and eyes in addition to the head injury. He was ~~very~~ underweight and it was apparent the ~~parent~~ child had not received adequate feeding.

At this time our dept. took custody of both children ~~after~~ ^{upon} receiving a report from the hospital.
Mrs.

During the following investigation, Mrs. Burton's reactions were quite flat. She would talk only ~~and~~ when questioned directly and then would answer with very short statements, showing no ~~and~~ emotion and never looking at those talking to her. For these reasons we recommended both parents visit a psychiatrist and have an evaluation sent to us previous to the initial hearing.

They obtained this evaluation from Dr. Grace of Odessa and it was his opinion that Mrs. Burton was unstable, immature and should receive psychiatric treatment previous to their children

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being returned.

For several weeks, during the time Charles Jr. was in the hosp, the Burtons had not made any housing arrangements. They slept in the hosp and Mr. Burton did get a job, but both he and his wife stayed at the hosp.

From the time we entered the case 11-9-70 until the first hearing 12-12-70, the Burtons made only one request to see their daughter who we had in foster care. They made an appointment to see Therman on 12-4-70 and then did not show up.

During the first hearing 2 doctors ^{to nurse} testified to Charles Jr.'s physical condition, ~~and~~ the conflict of stories, ~~and~~ Relatives testified to the poor conditions in which the children had been kept. Also Dr. Eric ~~testified~~ gave his evaluation, recommending the children not be returned until ^{the mother} ~~she~~ obtains psychiatric treatment.

The district judge ~~it~~ ruled that our agency be granted temporary custody for 6 months. During this time the court recommended Mrs. Burton obtain psychiatric treatment, ~~they~~ visit their children frequently, and that they stabilize their home & financial situation.

During the next five months the Burtons refused to obtain the psychiatric treatment - first because of cost. Then when we suggested voluntary commitment at Ogden State Hosp. they refused, even though this would be free.

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Out of 13 possible visits, the Burtons could have had with their children, they only made 5. Eight times they made appointments, but 3 of these they did not show up claiming their alarm had not gone off. These appointments were usually set for 3:00pm and even though Mrs. Burton was working late hours, it is not felt these appointments would have been missed if ~~they~~ ^{the parents} were sincerely concerned. The Burtons would not contact us when they missed visits and would not be heard from ^{until} several days later.

On several occasions, the visits would have to be terminated, because Charles Jr. would become ~~extremely~~ ^{violently} upset when he was ~~held~~ held by one of the parents. Mrs. Burton showed no emotion during these visits nor when they had to be terminated. She would rarely make any comments or question our workers in any way as to the care of the children etc.

While awaiting the 2nd hearing, we received word from Fort Riley Kansas that Vivian Burton had been ~~hospitalized~~ hospitalized in April of 1970 due to a failure to thrive. In this report from Irwin Army Hosp they state "When ~~questioned~~ questions were asked concerning the feeding habits the answers were a little unusual and inconsistent." Following this hospitalization the Doctors recommended the Burtons receive ~~some~~ counseling in proper care and feeding of children in the Pediatric Outpatients

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clinic, which they never did.

Due to the fact the Burtons were not making their visits with the children and ~~on~~ their ~~refuse~~ refusal to obtain psychiatric treatment a 2nd hearing was requested by our dept.

Just previous to this Mr. Burton called ~~in~~ reporting his wife had cancer and ^{they} would not be able to see the children for some time. Their ~~B~~ doctor was contacted and advised ~~she~~ her tests had been received and she did not have cancer, but that even so her condition never warranted their not seeing the children.

Mr. Burton then quit his job stating he was entering the Air Force and must stay available to the recruiter. The Air Force Recruiting office state they never heard of Mr. Burton. ~~He~~

Mr. B then took a job with an oil company where he was fired after one week due to his being undependable. He ~~is~~ presently is back with ~~B~~ his original employer.

During the 2nd hearing, which was held May 24, 1971, Mrs. Burton had very little reactions to questioning and to the things being said about their care for their children. The judge questioned her directly attempting to obtain a response of some kind and received none.

His decision following this hearing was for her to voluntarily commit herself to the Big Spring

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State Hospital, for a length of time necessary for an accurate evaluation to be made by the hospital staff. This evaluation would be to determine what psychological ~~prob~~ problems she may have and whether or not children placed in her care would be endangered in any way.

Because of the length of time these two children have been in foster care, and as permanent plans should be made as soon as possible, we are asking that Mrs. Burton be evaluated as soon as is possible. We understand this is quite involved and do wish this evaluation to be as accurate as possible and so will take time.

Your co-operation in this matter is appreciated and if we might provide any additional information, please let us know.

Mrs. Burton is to enter your Hoop between 8-10 AM Friday June 4, 1971