

POSITIVE ATTITUDE OUTLOOK, INC.

A FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY

MOTIVATION*DETERMINATION*THE PLACE TO BE

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SMALL FAMILY HOME INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINT OF CHILD ABUSE

I. Introduction:

Complaint received on November 17, 1998 from Licensing Supervisor Ron Stecki of Kern County. A caller telephoned Ron Stecki reporting that Pauline [redacted] alleged that, "Michael [redacted] mean and that the kids in the home get spankings all the time." Pauline added, that she overheard Cindy [redacted] getting spanked—two (2) swats. Mr. Stecki did not reveal the identity of the caller.

II. Complaint is against Michael [redacted] (born on [redacted], SS# [redacted]) and Terry [redacted] (born on [redacted], SS# [redacted]); foster parents, for the [redacted] Small Family Home, at [redacted]

III. Children placed in the Home at the time of the investigation:

Name	DOB	Age	County Social Worker
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	Miriam Ocompo, Kern Co. DHS
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	Miriam Ocompo, Kern Co. DHS
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	Miriam Ocompo, Kern Co. DHS
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	Miriam Ocompo, Kern Co. DHS
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	Melissa Jenkins, Kern Co. DHS
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	Debbie Barnes, Kern Co. DHS

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IV. Investigation Plan:

Omar Hemali is Positive Attitude's Social Worker for the [REDACTED] Small Family Home; therefore, he was excluded from the investigation. Ronn Pennington and Lillian Adkins were selected, as two uninterested investigators, by Diane Prosser, Deputy Director of Positive Attitude Outlook, Inc.

V. Body of Investigation:

A. Investigation-By Ronn Pennington:

On Tuesday, November 24, 1998, the above investigating Social Workers called [REDACTED] Elementary School to inform them that, two of Positive Attitude Outlook Social Workers would be coming to the school to talk to the (4) Martin Children and Cindy [REDACTED], all students of [REDACTED] Elementary School.

Adolfo (Rudy) [REDACTED] was not at [REDACTED] School, but at [REDACTED] School. Rudy is another child that is placed in the [REDACTED] Small Family Home.

The decision was for Mr. Pennington to interview the boys, in one room and for Mrs. Adkins to interview the girls in another.

The boys present were Joshua [REDACTED], age (11) and [REDACTED] (Billy) [REDACTED], age (7). Mr. Pennington's interview findings were as follows:

The Social Worker, Mr. Pennington, asked how things were going. The boys answered, "Fine."

(Q-SW) How do you like it in the [REDACTED] Home? (Ans-Boys) "Fine"

(Q-SW) Do you ever get into trouble? (Ans-Boys) "Yes!"

(Q-SW) What happens when you get into trouble? (Ans-Boys) "We get spanked with the paddle." (Q-SW) Tell me, "Was it like a ping - pong paddle?"

(Ans-Boys) "No!" (Ans-Joshua) It was about 1 inch thick and he demonstrated by using hand gestures for about 4 to 5 inches wide. (Q-SW) Did this happen, just one time? (Ans-Boys) No! Lots of times.

(Q-SW) Was it a long time ago? (Ans-Boys) Yes!

(Q-SW) When was the last time? (Ans-Billy) The last time I got spanked was when I unscrewed the bolts on my bed and it almost fell apart.

(Q-SW) Is there anything else that bother you? (Ans-Joshua) Yes!, The girls get their backs rubbed every night, but we don't and Billy said, "He, (referring to Mr. [REDACTED]) won't even let us sit on his lap, like the girls, he says, "we stink too much."

(Q-SW) How do you know that they get their backs rubbed each night.

(Ans-Boys) We hear them. (Ans-Joshua) He said, "Pauline said, 'she does not

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like to get her back rubbed anymore because, Mike, Mr. [REDACTED], rubs her butt."

This Investigator / Social Worker, Ronn Pennington, dismissed the boys (Joshua and Billy [REDACTED]) and joined Mrs. Adkins in the room with the girls (Pauline, Rebecca [REDACTED] and Cindy [REDACTED]).

(Q-SW Ronn Pennington) The girls were asked how they were doing, which lead into the question of how they liked the back rubs each night. Pauline verified the statement of Joshua. This Social Worker asked the girls to describe the back rubs. Rebecca indicated that it was kind of tickle, tickle and she demonstrated on her chest and arms. She was then asked if the rubs went all over and down to the toes. The girls answered in the affirmative. The girls were asked if the full body rubs touched the private parts, they answered, "yes!" The question about full body rubs and touching the private parts was asked again and the twins answered, "yes!" When the girls were asked if the rubs went inside the panties, they became silent and looked guilty and said, "Uh hu."

Based on information gathered on November 21, 1998 at [REDACTED] School, by Positive Attitude Investigators Ronn Pennington and Lillian Adkins, it is recommended that all the children placed in the [REDACTED] Small Family Home be immediately removed and that Child Protective Services be notified to reopen their investigation into the Physical Abuse, expand their investigation to include the Sexual Abuse allegations.

A. Investigation-By Lillian Adkins:

On 11-24-98, Ronn Pennington and I interviewed the children at [REDACTED] Elementary School regarding the allegations stated above.

I met initially with Pauline and Rebecca [REDACTED]. I was instructed to discuss items other than abuse to gain rapport with the children. However, after introductions and one sentence, Rebecca brought up a question unrelated to our conversation. She asked if foster parents are allowed to spank the children. I informed her that foster parents have more strict rules to follow so they cannot spank foster children.

Rebecca and Pauline described the wooden paddle Mr. [REDACTED] uses for spanking some of the children. They designated dimensions of paddle by their hands and fingers.

From this information, paddle size may be 1 inch thick, handle is 6 to 8 inches long, and rounded part of paddle is 8 to 10 inches in diameter.

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According to Pauline and Rebecca they had not been hit by the paddle, but were threatened with it for not cleaning their rooms or talking back. They indicated that Josh and Billy were hit by the paddle. Approximate number of wacks per incident was two. The boys were hit with the paddle, according to Pauline and Rebecca, for not cleaning their rooms, talking back, and hurting other children.

When questioned about incidents of hurting other children, Pauline stated that Mr. [REDACTED] kicked Josh in the "balls" 2 to 3 times after Mr. [REDACTED] discovered that Josh hurt Maria, a neighbor female child. According to Pauline, the mother of Maria also kicked Josh.

Pauline mentioned that Cindy would receive physical punishment for urinating in her bed. Rebecca added that she (Rebecca) was slapped by Mrs. [REDACTED] on the cheek one time for talking back and having a messy room. Pauline and Rebecca stated that they witnessed Mr. [REDACTED] hit Cindy's bare bottom with his hand after Cindy got out of the shower. When asked why, they said it was because she urinated in the bed.

Pauline and Rebecca also mentioned that Mrs. [REDACTED] socked Rudy and Josh in the chest for fighting in the car. They then expanded on physical punishment sustained by Cindy [REDACTED]. According to Pauline and Rebecca, Cindy's hair was pulled as she was taken out of her room. She was then slapped in the face approximately 4 times by Mrs. [REDACTED]. According to Rebecca, Mrs. [REDACTED] dumped drawers of Cindy's belongings onto the floor asking her if she wanted to live in a "pig sty".

Cindy joined Pauline and Rebecca in our room but did not add to the conversation. Shortly afterwards, Ronn Pennington came in to talk to us. He asked if the children ever had back rubs. Pauline stated that Mr. [REDACTED] did give her back rubs but she didn't like them. She said Mr. [REDACTED] stopped. When questioned about the area and the type of tactile contact experienced, Pauline stated it was a tickle which went past her "butt" and down her leg.

After that conversation and questioning by Ronn if Cindy had any back rubs, Cindy stated that she had back rubs on her whole body but not in her panties. Pauline added that her back rubs occurred every couple weeks on the whole body— front and back— no concentration in any area.

Rebecca mentioned that her last back rub was the previous night but Mr. Wilkerson did not go into her panties. She said that other times he had tickled her in her panties. She did say that he told her "if you don't like what I do— tell me".

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VI. Conclusions:

It is these investigators (Lillian Adkins and Ronn Pennington) conclusions that the allegations of physical abuse did in fact take place as per the abuse investigation. In addition to the allegation of physical abuse these investigators discovered in the process of the investigation that there was substantial verification of new allegations of sexual abuse.

VII. Recommendation:

Based on information gathered on November 24, 1998 at [REDACTED] School by Positive Attitude Outlook Investigators, Lillian Adkins and Ronn Pennington. It is recommended that all the children, placed in the [REDACTED] Small Family Home, be immediately removed from the home and Child Protective Services be notified to reopen their investigation into physical abuse. In addition to physical abuse, the investigation by Child Protective Services should include the sexual abuse allegations.

VIII. Action Taken:

[REDACTED] Schools and the County Social Workers were notified of the action by Positive Attitude. Positive Attitude chose not to allow the children to return to the [REDACTED] Small Family Home, but placed them in other Positive Attitude Outlook Small Family Homes.

On November 24, 1998 Deputy Director, Diane Prosser, telephoned Mr. Ron Stecki, Licensing Supervisor of Kern County Department of Human Services, notifying him of the abuse findings and subsequently both faxed and mailed to Department of Human Services a Suspected Child Abuse Report regarding the indicated findings and Positive Attitude Outlook findings from the investigation.

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Investigator:

[Signature]
Ronn Pennington, M.S., P.P.S.
Social Worker

12-4-98
Date

[Signature]
Lillian Adkins, M.S.W.
Social Worker

12-4-98
Date

Deputy Director: *[Signature]*
Diane Prosser, M.S., M.F.C.C.

12-4-98
Date

RUP/LMf

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