



Florida House of Representatives

Tallahassee, Florida
32399-1300

December 28, 1994

Agent Melissa Russell
Florida Department of Law Enforcement
400 W. Robinson Avenue
Orlando, FL 32802

Dear Agent Russell:

My office was recently asked to monitor a parental kidnapping case involving Antonio Hernandez Soto. Benjamin's mother is a member of my church and was distraught at the loss of her son. We soon discovered that the case was proceeding smoothly, timely and, so far as we could tell, without any mistakes at all. Mrs. Hernandez now has her son back and it is thanks to your part in the case that it resulted in such a satisfying outcome.

I would like to personally thank you for your diligence and efficiency. It is servants like you that prove our system works. Thank you so very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Daniel Webster", is written over the printed name.

Daniel Webster
Republican Leader

DW:sc



City of Orlando

100 SOUTH HUGHEY AVENUE
ORLANDO, FLORIDA
32801-0913

POLICE
DEPARTMENT

TELEPHONE (407) 246-2470
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December 28, 1994

Agent Melissa Russell
Florida Department of Law Enforcement
400 W. Robinson Avenue
Orlando, FL 32802

Dear Ms. Russell:

On June 27, 1994, the Orlando Police Department began an investigation in reference to an Interference with Custody (parental abduction) case. On June 3, 1994, the suspect, Antonio Hernandez Soto, had taken his 18 month old son, Benjamin, during a weekly visit and failed to return the child to his mother.

On June 30, 1994, a felony warrant was obtained for Interference with Custody for Soto. Intelligence was received that the suspect had taken \$73,000.00 from a safety deposit box and the suspect fled with the child to Hawkinsville, Georgia where the suspect's daughter resided. The suspect's daughter stated the suspect had been at her residence but his whereabouts were unknown. Information later received indicated the suspect may have fled to Texas and possibly went into Mexico. On October 17, 1994, the FBI also obtained a federal warrant for Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution and notified the involved agencies and Mexican officials. On November 13, 1994, the suspect, Antonio Soto, was apprehended by U.S. Customs while attempting to cross the border from Mexico into Brownsville, Texas. The suspect was extradited back to Orlando and eventually disclosed the location of the child. On December 19, 1994, the child was brought back from Mexico and delivered to his mother by U.S. Customs.

During this investigation, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the Hawkinsville (Polaski County) Police, Corpus Christi (Texas) Police, Brownsville (Texas) Police, Texas Rangers, Georgia Bureau of Investigations, U.S. Customs, FBI, and the National Center for Missing Children were contacted in an effort to locate the suspect and return the child to his mother.

Throughout this investigation the cooperation between the Orlando Police Department and the aforementioned agencies was essential in the positive closure of this case. The representatives of each of these agencies were able to give a substantial amount of their time, in addition to normal workload. These persons did so efficiently and professionally. As a result, an 18 month old child was successfully reunited with his mother after a six month separation. The cooperation and consistent interaction with this number of agencies was invaluable in this investigation and the persons responsible deserve recognition for their efforts.

I trust that your agency will not hesitate in requesting any future assistance the Orlando Police Department may provide.

Sincerely,

Thomas D. Hurlburt, Jr.
Chief of Police

Meliss

Florida Department of
Law Enforcement

James T. "Tim" Moore
Commissioner

P.O. Box 1489
Tallahassee, Florida 32302
(904) 488-8771

Lawton Chiles, *Governor*
Sandra B. Mortham, *Secretary of State*
Robert A. Butterworth, *Attorney General*
Robert F. Milligan, *Comptroller*
Bill Nelson, *Treasurer*
Bob Crawford, *Commissioner of Agriculture*
Frank T. Brogan, *Commissioner of Education*

January 17, 1995

Honorable Daniel Webster
Republican Leader
Florida House of Representatives
The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1300

Dear Representative Webster:

I have received a copy of your recent letter commending Melissa Russell for assisting in the case of Benjamin Hernandez. I wish to thank you for taking the time to compliment Ms. Russell for assisting you. We focus on service as a value of our Department and are pleased when the fruits of these efforts are noticed by the people we serve. Ms. Russell is one of many of our members who has incorporated the FDLE fundamental value of service into their daily activities. She, along with others at FDLE, makes concerted efforts to meet the needs of individuals who request assistance.

Once again, thank you for the letter commending Ms. Russell. It will be placed in her personnel file to become a permanent part of her record. If we can be of further service to you, please call me at (904) 488-8771 or Director James D. Sewell at (904) 488-3961.

Sincerely,



James T. Moore
Commissioner

JTM/MW/lss