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Witness in child pornography case wants to remain in safe foster care

Associated Press
BROWNSVILLE — The mother of a teen-age girl being held as a material witness in a pornography case went to court Tuesday in an effort to regain custody of her daughter.

But the 14-year-old girl told State District Judge Menton Murray Jr. that she wanted to stay in foster care until the end of the trials of two accused pornographers.

"I feel it would be more safe if I stayed here in foster care until the trial is over," the girl said.

The girl, a runaway from Missouri, allegedly posed nude for two Brownsville men who have been indicted on charges of inducing sexual performance by a child.

She has been in the Cameron County Juvenile Detention Center since July 10. A \$5,000 bond is

needed for her release.

But Assistant District Attorney Gustavo Garza and attorney Gail Kahn, who was appointed as the girl's legal guardian, urged that the girl continue to be held in foster care.

"She wants to be released, but she doesn't want to go back to Missouri," Kahn said. "Because of the testimony she is going to make she feels she would not be protected. She wants to remain in foster care. I understand her fears."

Kahn was appointed last week as the girl's guardian because the mother had failed to appear for two previous hearings.

Attorney Larry Warner, however, urged that the girl be turned over to her mother, who said she now can

control her runaway daughter. "I love my daughter and I want her with me," the mother told the court. "I think I can keep her from running away."

But Garza insisted the girl did not obey her mother and it would be a problem getting her back to trial to testify. He also said the mother, a widow who has three other children at home, was not responsible enough to care for the girl.

But the woman said she missed the previous hearings because she was told not to be in Brownsville until Tuesday. She said she already had enrolled her daughter in a mental health clinic and planned to place her in school.

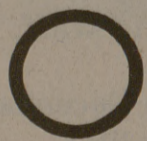
The judge took the case under advisement and said he would rule by day.



Hair: D'Lynn of Ferguson and Company • Make-up: Lucia Montealegre Adams of Park Avenue • Photography: Bill Hughs

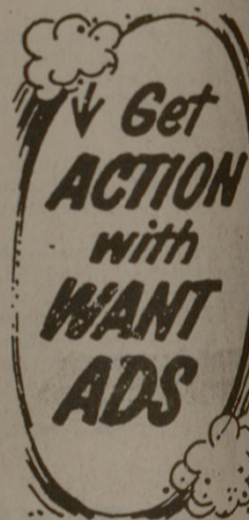
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- Cotton foulard shirt and cotton denim drop-pleat skirt both by Calvin Klein.
- Lambswool Cardigan by Gene Pressman and Lance Karesh for Basco.
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