

Kidnapping

Woman charged with abducting infant

Associated Press

AUSTIN — A woman charged with kidnapping a 4-day-old baby from a mother at Brackenridge Hospital had faked a pregnancy so well for nine months that many of her friends were fooled, police said.

Police Sgt. Earnest Session said a woman, dressed in white clothes to resemble a nurse, took the baby girl from the arms of her mother, Wanda Glover, as she was feeding her Friday morning.

The woman told Glover the child had to return to the nursery for blood tests.

Stephanie Jackson, 32, was being held on an investigative charge of kidnapping, a third-degree felony, police said.

Jackson, who was in the city jail Sunday in lieu of \$15,000 bond, had been telling acquaintances and her husband that she was pregnant, Session said Saturday.

"She had people convinced," he said, adding that the woman is married and has two teen-age children and a younger child.

Investigators have not determined why the child was abducted or why Jackson pretended to be pregnant.

"I've talked to the woman, and I still don't know why she did it," Session said.

Police arrested two other people in connection with the abduction but released them after determining they were not involved, Session said.

Jackson was arrested at her home at about 5:30 p.m. Friday after po-

"As soon as she walked out the door I knew something was wrong. Almost instantly."

Wanda Glover, mother of kidnapped infant.

lice received a tip that she had the baby, Session said.

The child, Kendra Glover, was returned to the hospital. Her identity was confirmed by a comparison of her footprints with ones made previously at the hospital.

Glover said Saturday she was surprised the child was recovered so quickly and that she thought "it would take two or three days."

Glover, 19, said she was feeding the child at 10 a.m. Friday when a woman entered the room and told her the baby had to be returned to the nursery for blood tests.

"As soon as she walked out the door I knew something was wrong," Glover said. "Almost instantly."

She said she noticed the woman wasn't wearing a nametag but didn't really pay attention to it until the woman had left.

The young mother, who also has a 3-year-old child, called nurses who told her they did not take her baby.

"I just couldn't believe it," she said. "I just sat here and thought a lot. I couldn't do anything but cry."

The suspect left the hospital and walked to the nearby home of a friend, where she changed clothes and then walked to her own house, Session said.

The kidnapping was similar to the May 1984 abduction of an infant from the Brackenridge maternity ward. That baby was recovered unharmed 36 hours after the kidnapping.

Hospital officials say they do not have immediate plans to increase security and that the hospital's security system is similar to other hospitals.

Interpreters' training questioned in trial

Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — A defense attorney in the murder trial of a deaf man has raised the question of whether interpreters provided by authorities were trained well enough to guarantee that his client knew what was going on.

Billy Gene Capers, 21, who is deaf, is on trial on a murder charge in the Aug. 24, 1984 slaying of Ginger Phillips, 20, a classmate at a school for the hearing impaired.

Defense attorney Donald Mach said the state failed to provide competent interpreters in various stages of the legal process.

After the state rested its case Friday, Mach attempted to quash a confession that Capers gave police during questioning, on grounds it was uncertain whether Capers understood his rights and the implications of the police questioning.

State District Judge Mike Machado allowed the statements to be entered into evidence.

Lucille Koehl, chairman of the board of evaluators for interpreters for the Texas Commission for the Deaf, testified that Capers and other hearing-impaired people "are not getting equal treatment and the rights guaranteed them by the Constitution."

Mach will start presenting his case Monday. The trial, which started Tuesday, has moved slowly because of the necessity of having interpreters translate testimony into sign language, then explain the sign language to attorneys and the jury.

Willie Ray Jackson, 21, also charged with Phillips' slaying, is awaiting trial pending a psychiatric examination for mental competency and sanity at the time of the killing.

The defendants and the victim were schoolmates at the Southwest Center for the Hearing Impaired of the Methodist Mission Home. Phillips' nude body was found in an abandoned home three days after she wandered from the nearby school with the defendants and other schoolmates.

When Capers gave police a statement in which he confessed participation in the murder, investigators employed psychotherapist Susan Starnes as interpreter.

Starnes testified Friday that she was certified in October 1984 by the Texas Commission for the Deaf as a Level III interpreter for the hearing impaired.

When she interpreted for Capers during police questioning she was just a Level I interpreter, she said, although she had already taken the test for Level III certification.

After the jury was excused until Monday, Koehl testified that her agency recommends that certified Level IV and V American Sign Language interpreters be used in legal proceedings.

Although the Texas Commission for the Deaf recommends that Level IV and V interpreters be used by the courts and police investigators, state law stipulates only that an interpreter be "qualified."

Appeals courts will have to decide what a qualified interpreter is and whether Capers' constitutional rights were protected, Machado ruled.

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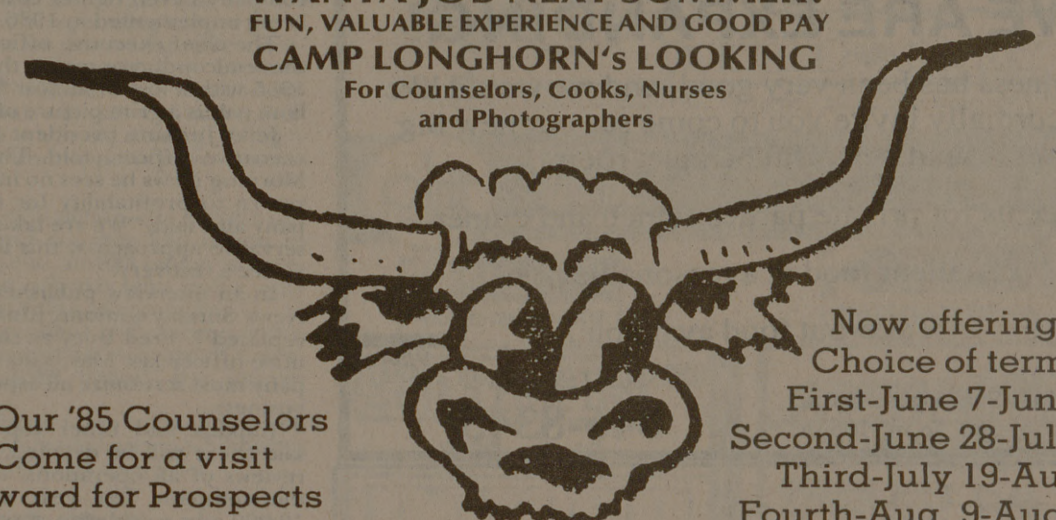
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