

Chapter 8



TEXASCASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN



Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see."

– John F. Kennedy, 35th president of the United States

Chapter 8: Moving Forward as an Advocate

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PRE-WORK INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read pages 251-278, “Initial Notes for the Redd Case” through “CASA/GAL Volunteer Competencies Review Activity.”
2. Using the Redd Case Notes and your program’s court report guide, complete the “Writing Your Court Report Activity” per your facilitator’s instructions.
3. Complete the “CASA/GAL Volunteer Competencies Review Activity.”

Initial Case Notes for the Redd Case

CPS Case File					
Last Name of Case: Redd			Legal Number(s): D-1-FM-18-123456		
Child(ren)'s Name	DOB	Age	Ethnicity	Sex	Current Location
Mariah Redd	Feb. 1	5 months	AA	F	Foster Care

Current Caretaker(s)	Address	Phone
Foster Mother: Julia Budd (not married)	1776 Grimes Creek Rd.	555-1766

Attorneys for:		
Mother	Darlene Wright	555-9898
Father	Walt Harris	555-1334
CPS	Robin Jackson	555-7544
Child	Winifred Price	555-0504

Case History
<p>Ms. Clarissa Ann Redd, African American, age 25, reported to SW that she has been using “sherm” (cigarettes dipped in PCP) on and off since she was 18. She has a 10-year-old son, Buddy, who is in the legal custody of her mother, Lela Jones. Lela is married to Clarissa’s stepfather, Charles Jones. Clarissa stays with them when she isn’t with a boyfriend. Clarissa’s second child, a 7-year-old boy named Tyrone, lives with his father, Willy Monroe.</p> <p>The local hospital notified CPS of an infant born on 2/1 who tested positive for PCP. The infant, named Mariah Redd, is the third child born to Clarissa Redd. She was removed from the care of Clarissa Redd and placed in foster care with Julia Budd. When Mariah was 2 months old, she and Clarissa went to Fresh Start, a residential mother/baby treatment program.</p>

CASA/GAL History	Person(s)	Date Assigned	Date Terminated
Case Initially Assigned to:	John Hill	2/19	6/30
Current CASA/GAL Volunteer:	You and your team	7/18	
Initial CPS Caseworker:	Heather Bunning		
Current CPS Caseworker:	Kim Ellis		

Court-Ordered Services
<p>For the Child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical health needs reviewed per physician’s orders due to high-risk birth • Educational needs met as appropriate
<p>For the Father:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish paternity • If applicable, pay child support
<p>For the Mother:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance abuse evaluation and follow recommendations of service provider • Urinalysis twice per week • Parenting classes

Service Unit Contact Sheet

IMAGINARY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

CASE NAME: Redd, Mariah

CASE WORKER: Kim Ellis

CASE NUMBER: 07456

SIS ID: 20094859466

2/1/18 Tele: Hospital reports birth of PCP-positive infant, female.

2/2/18 Hospital: Interview with mother, Clarissa Ann Redd, DOB 1/31/93, very hostile. Stated would not leave hospital without her baby. Hospital will discharge mother tomorrow; baby will stay for five-day detox and observation.

2/6/18 Home Visit (HV): Child placed with foster family: Julia Budd (phone and address)

2/14/18 HV: Foster home. Juvenile continues to progress well.

2/14/18 DSS: Visit with Clarissa Redd (mother) and Lela Jones (maternal grandmother). Tearful but appropriate behavior from Clarissa, said she didn't have a drug problem, "just smoked it [sherm] once in a while." Supervised visits set for 2 p.m. Friday, weekly.

2/20/18 HV: Maternal grandmother, Lela Jones, present for whole interview, supportive of daughter. Home placement not an option because Lela works. Family agreed that Mariah should stay in foster care while Clarissa "gets herself together." Clarissa was cooperative. She turned to her mother for guidance several times. Clarissa had no appointment for substance abuse evaluation, so we made one. Clarissa named boyfriend, Johnny Smith, as father for Mariah and asked if he could come to the visits.

2/21/18 DSS: Visit with Johnny Smith (alleged father), Clarissa (mother) and juvenile. Mr. Smith polite, cooperative, held the baby a lot, seemed proud. Stated Mariah is his but won't sign papers without a test. He agreed to contact CSE (Child Support Enforcement) for paternity test and voluntary child support. Clarissa spent time holding Mariah but also seemed jealous of her. Notified that volunteer advocate will observe a future visit. This was agreeable.

3/7/18 Tele: S/A counselor called to say Clarissa a "no show" for evaluation. (Also no show for visit with child.)

3/7/18 Tele: Called maternal grandmother, Lela Jones, who said she wasn't sure where

Clarissa was: "She's 25 now. I can't be keeping track of her every move."

3/14/18 DSS: Visit with Johnny, Clarissa, Mariah. Volunteer advocate present. Clarissa said they had car trouble last week. She will reschedule S/A appointment. Told them that CSE has agreed to see them after next visit. Reminded Clarissa adjudication is 3/18. She said, "Yeah, I know. After that I'm gonna get my baby back and be done with you." Told her that without the S/A evaluation, the court won't return custody.

3/18/18 Court orders: Clarissa to do S/A evaluation and follow recommendations. Mr. Smith to have paternity test and pay child support. Continue supervised visits.

3/28/18 DSS: Visit w/ Johnny, Clarissa, Mariah. This worker discussed substance abuse treatment options with Clarissa. Her 3/19 screen was + for PCP. S/A recommended residential mother/baby program, Fresh Start. She agreed to go but said she wasn't ready yet.

4/4/18 DSS: Visit with Clarissa, Mariah. Mother tearful, said she failed another drug screen and needs help. Agreed to Fresh Start. Said she can't stop using, that she's been high every weekend for as long as she can remember. Stated she hates stepfather. She doesn't like Buddy living there, but that's up to her mom now. I asked her what she was worried about, and she said, "Charles isn't a good man. He's mean!"

4/11/18 Fresh Start: Transported mother and baby to Fresh Start program. Baby transitioned well.

4/16/18 Tele: Call to Fresh Start. Clarissa adjusting to program. Baby is fine.

5/22/18 Fresh Start: Visit. Congratulated Clarissa for hanging in with the program. Mother and baby doing well.

6/20/18 Tele: Fresh Start called to say Clarissa is planning to leave AMA (against medical advice). She had been feuding with another client ("about nothing") and calling home a lot. Staff told her they'd call DSS and hold Mariah if she leaves. Clarissa has packed all her things and is waiting for a ride. Baby secure in building.

6/20/18 Drove to Fresh Start. Clarissa gone. Picked up baby. Julia Budd still available. Returned Mariah to her.

Medical History for Mariah Redd

Prepared by County Health Clinic, Dr. Scott, M.D.

Birth: Tested positive for PCP at birth. APGAR scores: 7/8. Child stayed in hospital for a five-day detox period, experiencing tremors and irritability. Nurses reported to SW that mother was hostile and refused services. Mother was discharged the day after the birth and did not return to visit the baby. Rock-a-Baby volunteers held Mariah every day and helped with feeding her.

County Health Clinic: SW referred Mariah to the county program for high-risk infants. Mariah was followed by the County Health Clinic for three months and then released into the regular well-baby program, as she showed no developmental delays or neurological deficits. Other County Health Clinic items of note:

- Clinic ran multiple HIV and Hepatitis-C tests. All were negative.
- Infant tolerates formula with no problem.

Pediatrician: Foster mom has been on schedule with inoculations and well-baby care. Mariah has had only the usual colds and earaches. Recent tests indicate potential abnormalities. A follow-up appointment has been requested.

Criminal Records for Clarissa Redd

DPS Criminal History Results

Person Name: Clarissa Ann Redd

Person ID: 012345678

Person Name:	CLARISSA ANN REDD
Person ID:	012345678
Requester Name:	KIM ELLIS
Requester ID:	7600200
Request Date:	06/25/2018
Date Completed:	06/28/2018
Name Returned:	REDD, CLARISSA

Comments:

The contents of this record are confidential and intended for dissemination only to criminal justice agencies or other individuals or agencies authorized by law to receive criminal history record information. Charges and dispositions contained herein have been coded under the standardized uniform offense and disposition classifications established for computerized criminal history records. Contact the contributing agency for specific or additional information regarding charges or dispositions. The use of the information contained herein must be in accordance with 28 CFR Chapter 1 Part 20 (Federal Register, Vol. 40, No. 98, PP22114-22119, as amended) and 42 USC 3789g. UNAUTHORIZED USE OR DISCLOSURE OF THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS RECORD MAY RESULT IN SEVERE CRIMINAL PENALTIES. SEE SECTION 411.085. TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE.

REDD,CLARISSA (SID: 012345678)

ARREST DATE 09/3/2016 (2 CHARGES)

SID	012345678
DATE LAST UPDATED	04/01/2018
SEX	FEMALE
RACE	AA
HEIGHT	4'11"
WEIGHT	110 LBS
EYES	HAZEL
HAIR	BROWN
PLACE OF BIRTH	TEXAS
FBI#	123456AZ
DNA ON FILE	NO
NAME(S)	RED, CLARISSA REDD, CLARRISSA REDD, CLARISSA (Primary) REDD, CLARISSA ANN REDD, RISSA

Criminal Records for Clarissa Redd

DPS Criminal History Results

Person Name: Clarissa Ann Redd Person ID: 012345678
--

BIRTH DATE(S)	01/31/1993
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER(S)	012-34-5678
SCARS, MARKS & TATTOOS	SC ABDOM TAT L ANKL TAT L WRS TAT UR ARM TAT L SHLDR

ARREST DETAIL	
ARREST DATE	02/24/15
SEQUENCE CODE	A
ARRESTING AGENCY	AUSTIN PD (TX2270100)
ARREST DATE 02/24/15 (1 CHARGE)	
OFFENSE RECORD	
INTERNAL AGENCY PERSON NUMBER	143512
ARREST OFFENSE	ASSLT-(FREE TEXT) (13000000)
ARREST OFFENSE LITERAL	ASSAULT WITH BODILY INJURY
ARREST DISPOSITION	RELEASED WITHOUT PROSECUTION (207)

ARREST DATE 12/02/14 (2 CHARGES)	
ARREST DETAIL	
ARREST DATE	12/02/14
SEQUENCE CODE	B
ARRESTING AGENCY	AUSTIN PD (TX2270100)
ARREST DATE 12/02/14 (CHARGE 001)	
OFFENSE RECORD	
ARREST OFFENSE	M POSSESS MARIJUANA UP TO 2OZ
ARREST OFFENSE LITERAL	POSS OF MARIJ
LEVEL AND DEGREE OF OFFENSE	MISDEMEANOR

COURT STATUS A	
COURT OFFENSE	MARIJUANA-POSSESS (355620000)
COURT OFFENSE LITERAL	POSS OF MARIJ
LEVEL AND DEGREE OFFENSE	MISDEMEANOR - CLASS B
COURT DISPOSITION	CONVICTED (310)
COURT OFFENCE CITATION	X
COURT FINE:	90

Criminal Records for Clarissa Redd

DPS Criminal History Results

Person Name: Clarissa Ann Redd Person ID: 012345678
--

COURT DISPOSITION DATE	04/18/14
ARREST DATE 12/02/14 (CHARGE *002)	
OFFENSE RECORD	
ARREST OFFENSE	M POS DRUG PARAPHERNALIA
ARREST OFFENSE LITERAL	POSS DRUG PARAPHERNALIA
ARREST DATE 06/17/13 (1 CHARGE)	
ARREST DETAIL	
ARREST DATE	06/17/13
SEQUENCE CODE	A
ARRESTING AGENCY	AUSTIN PD (TX2270100)
ARREST DATE 06/17/13 (CHARGE *001)	
OFFENSE RECORD	
INTERNAL AGENCY PERSON NUMBER	143512
OFFENSE ADDRESS:	WILMINGTON ST., 78702
ARREST OFFENSE	M SIMPLE ASSAULT
ARREST OFFENSE LITERAL	M SIMPLE ASSAULT
LEVEL AND DEGREE OF OFFENSE	MISDEMEANOR - CLASS B
COURT DISPOSITION	CONVICTED (310)
COURT OFFENCE CITATION	X
COURT FINE:	65
COURT DISPOSITION DATE	10/20/13
SPECIAL CONDITIONS:	NO FURTHER CONTACT W/GINA M
ARREST DATE 02/19/12 (1 CHARGE)	
ARREST DETAIL	
ARREST DATE	02/19/12
SEQUENCE CODE	B
ARRESTING AGENCY	AUSTIN PD (TX2270100)
ARREST DATE 02/19/12 (CHARGE *001)	
OFFENSE RECORD	
INTERNAL AGENCY PERSON NUMBER	143512
ARREST OFFENSE	M SIMPLE WORTHLESS CHECK
SPECIAL CONDITIONS:	DISMISSED BY DA BECAUSE CHECK PD AND WITNESS WHO TOOK CHECK COMP

Criminal Records for Clarissa Redd

DPS Criminal History Results

Person Name: Clarissa Ann Redd Person ID: 012345678
--

ARREST DATE 12/14/11 (1 CHARGE)

ARREST DETAIL

ARREST DATE	12/14/11
SEQUENCE CODE	B
ARRESTING AGENCY	AUSTIN PD (TX2270100)
ARREST DATE 12/14/11 (CHARGE *001)	
OFFENSE RECORD	
INTERNAL AGENCY PERSON NUMBER	143512
ARREST OFFENSE	M DISORDERLY CONDUCT
ARREST OFFENSE LITERAL	DISORDERLY CONDUCT
COURT FINE	101
SPECIAL CONDITIONS	SUSO ON COND PAY FINE AND COSTS

ARREST DATE 08/05/11 (1 CHARGE)

ARREST DETAIL

ARREST DATE	08/05/11
SEQUENCE CODE	B
ARRESTING AGENCY	AUSTIN PD (TX2270100)
ARREST DATE 08/05/11 (CHARGE *001)	
OFFENSE RECORD	
INTERNAL AGENCY PERSON NUMBER	143512
ARREST OFFENSE	M MISDEMEANOR LARCENY
ARREST OFFENSE LITERAL	M MISDEMEANOR LARCENY
COURT FINE	150
SPECIAL CONDITIONS	24 HRS COMM SERV, EGT

Criminal Records for Charles Jones

DPS Criminal History Results

Person Name: Charles E Jones

Person ID: 456780123

Person Name:	CHARLES E JONES
Person ID:	456780123
Requester Name:	KIM ELLIS
Requester ID:	7600200
Request Date:	04/01/2018
Date Completed:	01/01/2018
Name Returned:	JONES, CHARLES

Comments:

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JONES, CHARLES (SID: 456780123)

SID	456780123
DATE LAST UPDATED	08/15/2017
SEX	MALE
RACE	WHITE
HEIGHT	5'9"
WEIGHT	190 LBS
EYES	BROWN
HAIR	AUBURN
PLACE OF BIRTH	TEXAS
FBI#	456123ZA
DNA ON FILE	NO
NAME(S)	JONES, CHUCK JONES, CHARLIE JONES, CHARLES (Primary) JONES, CHUCKY JONAS, CHARLES
BIRTH DATE(S)	01/31/1965
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER(S)	456-78-0123

Criminal Records for Charles Jones

DPS Criminal History Results

Person Name: Charles E Jones Person ID: 456780123
--

BIRTH DATE(S)	01/31/1965
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER(S)	456-78-0123
SCARS, MARKS & TATTOOS	SC L EYEBROW TAT L SLEEVE TAT FULL BACK TAT L BRST
ARREST DETAIL	
ARREST DATE	08/15/17
SEQUENCE CODE	A
ARRESTING AGENCY	AUSTIN PD (TX2270100)
ARREST DATE 08/15/17 (1 CHARGE)	
OFFENSE RECORD	
INTERNAL AGENCY PERSON NUMBER	143512
ARREST OFFENSE	ASSLT-(FREE TEXT) (13000000)
ARREST OFFENSE LITERAL	M ASSAULT ON A FEMALE
COURT FINE:	100
RESTITUTION:	588.25
SPECIAL CONDITIONS:	PAY REST TO ARMC BY 09/15/17, COURT COSTS TO BE PAID TODAY
ARREST DATE 08/07/96 (1 CHARGE)	
ARREST DETAIL	
ARREST DATE	08/07/96
SEQUENCE CODE	A
ARRESTING AGENCY	AUSTIN PD (TX2270100)
ARREST DATE 08/07/96 (1 CHARGE)	
OFFENSE RECORD	
ARREST OFFENSE	F PWIMSD MARIJUANA
ARREST OFFENSE LITERAL	F PWIMSD MARIJUANA
LEVEL AND DEGREE OF OFFENSE	FELONY
COURT STATUS A	
COURT OFFENSE	MARIJUANA-POSSESS (355620000)
COURT OFFENSE LITERAL	POSS OF MARIJ
LEVEL AND DEGREE OFFENSE	FELONY
COURT DISPOSITION	CONVICTED (310)

Criminal Records for Charles Jones

DPS Criminal History Results

Person Name: Charles E Jones Person ID: 456780123
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CONVICTED: 09/10/96
TIME SERVED: 271 DAY
RELEASE DATE: 06/08/97

ARREST DATE 09/17/90 (CHARGE 001)

OFFENSE RECORD

ARREST OFFENSE	M ASSAULT BY POINTING A GUN
ARREST OFFENSE LITERAL	M ASSAULT BY POINTING A GUN
SPECIAL CONDITION:	DISMISSED BY JUDGE

ARREST DATE 06/17/89 (1 CHARGE)

ARREST DETAIL

ARREST DATE	06/17/89
SEQUENCE CODE	B
ARRESTING AGENCY	AUSTIN PD (TX2270100)

ARREST DATE 06/17/89 (CHARGE *001)

OFFENSE RECORD

INTERNAL AGENCY PERSON NUMBER	143512
ARREST OFFENSE	M POSSESS DRUG PARAPHERNA
ARREST OFFENSE LITERAL	M POSSESS DRUG PARAPHERNA

ARREST DATE 03/19/83 (1 CHARGES)

ARREST DETAIL

ARREST DATE	03/19/83
SEQUENCE CODE	B
ARRESTING AGENCY	AUSTIN PD (TX2270100)

ARREST DATE 03/19/83 (CHARGE *001)

OFFENSE RECORD

INTERNAL AGENCY PERSON NUMBER	143512
ARREST OFFENSE	M ILLEGITIMATE CHILD/NON-SUPPORT
ARREST OFFENSE LITERAL	M ILLEGITIMATE CHILD/NON-SUPPORT
SPECIAL CONDITIONS:	SIGN WAGE WITHOLDING. SUPPORT COREY MILES – 70 PER WEEK

Substance Abuse Assessment

Family Name: Clarissa Redd

Case No: 123.456

Name: 07456

SIS ID: 3/28

1. Presenting Problem/Reason for Assessment

This case was referred to me by Kim Ellis, the foster care worker for Ms. Redd's PCP-positive female infant, Mariah Redd, born 2/1. Ms. Redd was PCP positive and tested at elevated levels of THC at the time of delivery. S/A assessment was requested to determine feasibility of reunification. Ms. Redd has a 10-year-old son in her mother's custody and a 7-year-old son living with his father. Ms. Redd is a single African American female, mother of three, and she is 25 years old.

2. Family of Origin History in Relation to:

A. Chemical Dependency

She said on her mother's side of the family her grandfather was an alcoholic but her mother doesn't drink. She said her stepfather is a drinker. She doesn't know about the rest of his family. She doesn't know about her natural father's family.

B. Mental Illness

She said there was no mental illness on either side of the family.

C. Marital Status

She said her mother and natural father were divorced when she was 4 years old. Her mother married her stepfather when she was 7. She has one sister.

D. Past Abuse

She said her mother never beat her but her stepfather did. He has not hit her since she grew up (age 18). She said he was really hard on her sister, who ran away to join the Army when she was 18. She said her sister accused the stepfather of attempting to have sex with her, but she doesn't believe it. Her mother said it wasn't true, "And besides, he never tried to touch me."

3. Education

Graduated high school

4. Employment

Not currently employed. Past employment includes fast food preparation and working at a car wash. She said she had never lost a job due to alcohol or drug use.

5. Legal Status—Past/Present

She has been arrested for assault, worthless checks, larceny, and, in 2008, possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia. She has never had a DWI.

6. Marital Status/Functioning

She has never been married.

7. Mental Illness History

She said she has never had counseling for life issues, been suicidal, homicidal or had hallucinations.

8. Chemical Dependency History

She started smoking cigarettes and drinking on weekends at the age of 14. After her first child was born when she was 15 years old, she began to smoke marijuana occasionally. When she was 18, she experimented with cigarettes dipped in PCP (“sherm”). She liked it immediately and started using it whenever she had the money, almost every weekend, even during her pregnancy. Her second child was born PCP positive the summer after she graduated H.S. At age 20 she “got busted with some weed” and states she was dealing marijuana at the time to get money for cocaine. She experimented with inhalants, mushrooms and speed in her early twenties but didn’t use them often. She claims that she has not used PCP since her baby was born and that she has only smoked marijuana about five times. She said she hasn’t been drunk in years and only rarely has a beer if friends are drinking. She denied having shakes, achy bones, blackouts, night sweats or hallucinations through the use of alcohol or drugs.

9. Treatment/Intervention

She attended NA weekly for four months in early 2010, as ordered by the court, subsequent to her drug charges. She did not continue to attend and never worked with a sponsor.

Substance Abuse Assessment

10. Prognosis—Strengths/Needs

Ms. Redd identified her mother and her boyfriend as her main support system. She does not see CPS as a support but stated that after court last week she understands she will have to work with them to get her baby back. She seems highly motivated to be reunited with her child. This may provide her with motivation to seek and complete treatment.

11. Recommendations

It is my recommendation that Ms. Redd enter Fresh Start or another mother/baby in-patient program where she can be reunited with her child immediately. She said she didn't want to leave town or be away from her boyfriend that long. Ms. Redd is in denial about the level of her addiction. She should at least enter our agency's pre-treatment program for women. I administered a drug screen today and recommend random tests for the next three months. If she uses PCP again, either in-patient or intensive outpatient (IOP) treatment is recommended.

12. Provisional Diagnosis

PCP Dependency. R/O: Dependent Personality Disorder

Signature: Grace Hanker, MS, CCAS

GH:ds/TH 107SA

Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Center: Fresh Start

Release form has been signed by patient; records are accessible to social worker and other necessary parties.

Fresh Start therapist explained to SW that Clarissa attended group sessions and individual therapy, but she “never seemed wholeheartedly committed to the program.” She seemed somewhat immature and self-centered. Her care for Mariah was only minimally sufficient, and she required a lot of coaching to parent even that well.

Clarissa was only in the program for two months before leaving AMA (against medical advice). Per clinicians, the usual stay is six months, minimum. Clarissa got into “petty disputes” with several other clients. Clarissa reported to this SW that an especially nasty and protracted “feud” between her and another client led to her leaving the program. Fresh Start staff stated that although they tried to mediate, Clarissa would not stop arguing with the other woman. Staff observed that Clarissa seemed to enjoy the excitement of it.

Fresh Start therapist noted to this SW: “She was very guarded and defensive in group, but we spoke a couple times in private. When Johnny’s paternity test came up negative, Clarissa was terrified he would leave her. She was sure he would abandon her and was just devastated when he did. That’s the real reason she blew out of here. Plus I think things were getting a little too real for her in group. You know almost every addicted woman we treat here has experienced some kind of sexual abuse in the past. Clarissa said that never happened to her, but she would get very uncomfortable when other women started processing around that topic. Her reaction had that too-close-for-comfort feeling to it.”

The therapist stated to this SW that Fresh Start would be willing to take Clarissa back into the program if she was willing to try again. They would have to interview her first, to make sure she’s really committed to her own sobriety this time.

Redd Case Interviews

Read the interviews in the following order:

- Foster Mother: Julia Budd (First Contact)
- Maternal Grandmother: Lela Jones (First Contact)
- Mother: Clarissa Redd
- Parents of Half-Brother Tyrone: Willy and Pearl Monroe
- Maternal Aunt: Sierra Redd Thomas (First Contact)
- Half-Brother: Buddy Redd
- Step-Grandfather: Charles Jones
- Social Worker: Kim Ellis (First Contact)
- Maternal Grandmother: Lela Jones (Second Contact)
- Maternal Aunt: Sierra Redd Thomas (Second Contact)
- Foster Mother: Julia Budd (Second Contact)
- Social Worker: Kim Ellis (Second Contact)

Foster Mother: Julia Budd (First Contact)

Julia Budd is a Caucasian single mom who runs an in-home day care. When I arrived, it was naptime and there were several little kids sleeping in playpens in the living room. Ms. Budd has three biological children, ages 15, 13 and 10, who were at school.

Ms. Budd showed me around the house, which was messy with kid stuff but clean. I peeked in on Mariah, who was napping on Julia's bed with pillows arranged to keep her from rolling off. She was appropriately dressed and appeared to be clean.

As I sat in the kitchen and chatted quietly with Ms. Budd, I heard a repeated occasional beep from the living room, a low-battery warning for a smoke alarm.

Ms. Budd described how small Mariah was when she first got her at 5 days old. “I asked the social worker, ‘Where’s the baby?’ She was buried by the blanket and I couldn’t even tell she was there! She only weighed 5 pounds.”

Ms. Budd told me that Mariah had qualified for early childhood services because of her exposure to PCP in utero but that she had been given a clean bill of health and released from that program. She has caught up in her size and now falls within normal parameters for her age.

Ms. Budd said she never planned to adopt; she just wanted to be a foster mother. But Mariah has stolen her heart, and she now wants to keep her.

Maternal Grandmother: Lela Jones (First Contact)

Lela agreed to meet during her lunch hour at work. She confirmed that her household consists of her and her husband, Charles, her daughter Clarissa, and Clarissa’s son Buddy, for whom Lela has legal custody.

She told me that Clarissa was only 15 when she had Buddy, “way too young to concentrate on a baby.” She said that Clarissa was always out playing around and also busy going to school—she did graduate from high school.

Lela ended up raising Buddy. Sometimes Clarissa would try to “pull rank on her and mess things up for him,” so finally Lela went to social services and got legal custody of Buddy.

I asked about Clarissa’s use of drugs when Buddy was born. She didn’t think Clarissa was using then, but started later after Buddy’s father left her. She doesn’t know where Buddy’s father is now—she thinks he left the state.

Lela seemed to minimize her daughter’s drug problem and talked like she doesn’t know what Clarissa is doing. She said that Clarissa will have to get it together for Mariah now because Lela can’t stay home with another baby.

Lela didn’t say much about Charles, except that he’s a hard worker and a good provider. “He’s the reason we have a good life.” Lela married Charles when Clarissa was 7 and Sierra was 10. Sierra is her other daughter. She and her husband live in Texas

Redd Case Interviews

and have a son, Antoine, who is 3. Sierra's husband is in the Army. Lela told me that Sierra's a good girl. "She never messed with drugs and boys like Clarissa."

I asked Lela about Buddy. She said that he is a good boy and gets good grades in school. He goes to church with Lela and sings in the children's choir. Lela said that he knows Clarissa is his mom, not his sister, but that he also knows that Lela is in charge.

I asked about Buddy and Charles and was told that Charles leaves the children mostly up to her. He takes Buddy to a ball game sometimes, but he's not that involved.

When I mentioned that I would like to interview Charles too, she said she would rather I not bother him. "He stays out of things where the kids are concerned. I don't know if he'll talk to you, really, and I don't think he'd have much to tell you that I can't tell you."

Mother: Clarissa Redd

Clarissa left her substance abuse treatment facility, Fresh Start, AMA (against medical advice).

Although she has continued to have positive drug screens, she insisted that she doesn't have a drug problem. "I don't do it that often anyway." She said that she is going to the NA (Narcotics Anonymous) meetings down at the armory, but she doesn't have a sponsor yet. She also had the substance abuse evaluation done.

In reference to her substance abuse evaluation, she said, "Those doctors don't know everything. They can't say what kind of a person I am after only a couple hours."

She stated that she loves Mariah and wants her back. However, she doesn't have a plan for fulfilling court-ordered requirements to do so. She said, "Give Mariah away? What! Are you crazy? They can't give away my child!"

She attended a parenting class. She has visitation with Mariah every other week. She said, "That's not enough, and it's not fair. She's my baby." She told me that she is no longer seeing Johnny anymore and that they broke up. She continues to be unemployed and to live in her mother's home.

Parents of Half-Brother Tyrone: Willy and Pearl Monroe

Willy, Pearl and Tyrone are home when I visit. I chatted with Tyrone briefly before he was sent next door to play with a neighbor.

Pearl told me that she and Willy come from “nice” families but that Clarissa’s people are “no good—except for Sierra, who was a good girl.” She does not trust Clarissa and has seen her all over town with lots of different men over the years, “doing the Lord knows what!” She believes that Clarissa’s boyfriend Johnny deals drugs. She stated that she does not want Mariah to suffer and hopes that a safe home for her can be found. “Clarissa won’t ever be a good mother.”

She and Willy were going together when he started to see Clarissa. The affair was short lived and Willy was quickly back with Pearl, although Clarissa was pregnant. “But then we wouldn’t have Tyrone if she hadn’t been, so I guess that’s for the best after all. I can’t have children myself.”

Willy added that Clarissa was too young and wild to take care of Tyrone, and he is glad she was willing to sign him over without a fight. He said that he does not want “to mess in anybody else’s business.” He only sees Clarissa a couple times a year when she visits Tyrone. Other than that, he has no idea what she does. He doesn’t really know Johnny Smith but commented that Johnny is “slick” looking.

Maternal Aunt: Sierra Redd Thomas (First Contact)

Sierra was polite and easy to speak with. She has been married for six years and has a 3-year-old son, Antoine.

She got out of the Army when she was pregnant to be a stay-at-home mom. Her husband is making a career of the Army.

She left home at age 18 and doesn’t call home often. She said that she left because her mother’s husband, Charles, made sexual advances on her more than once, when he was drinking. She was scared he might rape her, and her mom took his side and didn’t believe Sierra.

Redd Case Interviews

She doesn't understand why Clarissa keeps living there, and she's been worried about her for years, ever since she had Buddy. But Sierra doesn't see what she can do to help her sister. She is not prepared to invite Clarissa to come live with her in Texas.

She is interested in being a possible placement for Mariah and would consider keeping her if it came to that, but she must speak with her husband about it first.

I followed up with her a week later and was told that her husband was open to having Mariah live with them. She asked that I not say anything to her mother or sister for now. I told her to contact the social worker and express her interest.

Half-Brother: Buddy Redd

I went to the Jones house and found Buddy shooting baskets in the driveway. I spoke with him for a few minutes. He already knew who I was and was not afraid of me. He told me that he likes to play basketball and he's in the fifth grade at Hardy Elementary. He gets good grades and goes to church with his "mom" (Lela, not Clarissa).

I asked him where Charles was, and he told me that he was out back mowing the lawn. He said that Charles just wants him "to be good."

I noticed that Buddy seemed to have some darkness in his complexion under one eye. Thinking it might be a black eye, I asked where he got the shiner. He didn't understand the question, so I asked if someone had hit him. He said no, that he fell down on the playground at school. His teacher did not see it happen. He seemed a little uncomfortable at this point, so I thanked him for the visit and went to find Charles.

Step-Grandfather: Charles Jones

I was not able to get Charles on the phone, so I dropped by the house hoping to catch him home. Indeed, he was mowing their large lawn on a riding mower. He stopped the mower only when I practically stood in front of it.

When I introduced myself and my role, he said he's not in charge of the kids. I asked to speak with him for a few minutes anyway. He said he's really got nothing to say and he's got a lot of work to do. He said, "Excuse me," in a tone that expressed controlled hostility, then restarted the lawn mower and rode off.

Social Worker: Kim Ellis (First Contact)

I finally met social worker Kim Ellis several months into the case. She seemed nice but overworked.

She told me the following:

- Clarissa has not been in treatment since she left Fresh Start against medical advice.
- Clarissa dropped out of sight for a couple months. Lately she's been calling to request a visit with Mariah. Kim plans to let her visit only if she returns to County Mental Health for S/A treatment.
- Kim will ask Clarissa to agree to have a psychological evaluation.
- There is no viable service agreement right now because Clarissa is out of compliance.
- Mariah is doing well in her foster placement. Her health is good. The plan will be adoption by Julia Budd if Clarissa doesn't get it together.
- Kim is not in touch with any biological family members about placement. She believes the foster family—the only family Mariah's ever known—will be best for this baby.
- She has no direct knowledge of a problem between Clarissa's stepfather and Buddy, but she'll keep an eye out if she visits the home again. She told me that if I have a concern about a child I should report it.

Maternal Grandmother: Lela Jones (Second Contact)

Lela Jones told me that her daughter Sierra definitely lied about Charles. She just never liked him and she was trying to get Lela to divorce him, but "her little plan didn't work. I was so mad at her for accusing Charles like that, but I forgave her."

She admitted that Charles drinks sometimes but considers him to be a good man. She is aware of Charles's criminal record but says that was all from a long time ago. He

Redd Case Interviews

hasn't been in trouble since they've been together—about 15 years. "How long do you have to wait until it doesn't count against you anymore?!"

She said that Clarissa is not in treatment and hasn't done much about getting treatment. She believes that Clarissa does go to meetings sometimes. "I tell Clarissa to get help but she doesn't listen to me."

She refuses to "throw out" Clarissa from her home. "I still love her, and we still talk. Besides, Clarissa helps me with Buddy."

She said that Buddy had a black eye from being hit in the face with a football playing with some friends. She is adamant that Charles did not hit him.

Maternal Aunt: Sierra Redd Thomas (Second Contact)

I spoke with Sierra again. She said that if she takes Mariah, it will be a total commitment. She's only interested in adoption, not guardianship or custody, because she doesn't trust her family and doesn't want any future problems with them. She called Kim Ellis to express her interest in Mariah and said that the social worker was less than excited to hear from her. She is willing to come visit and meet Mariah whenever that can be arranged.

On the topic of Charles, she told me that he used to beat her and Clarissa "pretty bad as discipline."

She said that Charles really did make sexual advances on her. On two different occasions when he was drunk, he pressed her against the wall and kissed her. She was a 17-year-old high school senior at the time and said it was gross and terrifying. "I wouldn't lie about something like this even though they say I lied."

Foster Mother: Julia Budd (Second Contact)

On this visit Julia Budd's three biological children were present and the day care children were awake, so there was a lot of activity. Ms. Budd seemed to take everything in stride, "No one is crying so it's good." Mariah was being carried around the house by her big "siblings" and appeared happy. I spoke with each of Julia's children, and they all seem like typical kids.

I asked Ms. Budd why she wants to adopt Mariah, and she said, "We love her! We're all so attached to her." She mentioned that the social worker said a family member called. "I hate that they're coming out of the woodwork now. It's not fair!" She expressed concern that the family would take Mariah away from them.

I asked her how she plans to deal with Mariah's different racial background. How will she honor the child's racial and ethnic heritage, and deal with the obvious differences? She said, "Kids are kids. We're all humans, and Mariah will be a member of our family equal to everyone else." She told me that she cares for kids from all races in her day care and they get along just fine.

Social Worker: Kim Ellis (Second Contact)

I talked on the phone with Kim in November. She was unhappy that I had contacted Mariah's maternal aunt. "It's too bad you can't leave well enough alone!" She said that she would do a home study on Sierra if the court says she has to, but she thinks it would be a waste of time. "This baby already has a family that loves her, and she needs to stay there."

She told me that she believes that Clarissa is pretty much a lost cause. She's had plenty of chances and been offered a lot of services, but she just doesn't follow through.

CASA/GAL Volunteer Competencies Review Activity: Reflections on Your Growth and Learning

Take out the Developing Competencies checklist that you filled out prior to the beginning of training. Review the competencies and assess how you've grown over the course of training. Which competency categories do you still need to strengthen? Below, write down a plan for how you will address these areas.

Competency category: _____

What I need to strengthen: _____

Steps I will take to increase my competency: _____

CASA/GAL Volunteer Competencies Review Activity

Competency category: _____

What I need to strengthen: _____

Steps I will take to increase my competency: _____

Competency category: _____

What I need to strengthen: _____

Steps I will take to increase my competency: _____

CASA/GAL Volunteer Competencies Review Activity

Competency category: _____

What I need to strengthen: _____

Steps I will take to increase my competency: _____

Competency category: _____

What I need to strengthen: _____

Steps I will take to increase my competency: _____

END OF PRE-WORK FOR CHAPTER 8