

In July 1998 Samantha had her first child, [REDACTED] (DOB July 23/98) he was born in Winnipeg at St. Boniface Hospital. Prior to giving birth, Samantha had concealed her pregnancy and did not receive any prenatal care. St. Boniface Hospital made a referral to Cree Nation CFS when Samantha gave birth as she appeared very distant with hospital staff and from her newborn son. She appeared emotionally flat when discussing future plans for her child. She had also informed the nursing staff that she did not know she was pregnant with [REDACTED] until she took a pregnancy test when she was approximately 8 months pregnant.

The baby [REDACTED] was apprehended at birth by this agency on behalf of Cree Nation CFS. He was moved from the hospital to a foster home. Cree Nation CFS had developed a plan with Samantha, she was to be given an opportunity to parent her son with supports. He remained in the foster home and Samantha remained in the Independent Living program with MYS. Biweekly access visits were arranged while Samantha waited for an opening at the Oskki-Ikwe, a facility for young mothers at WaWayseeapow First Nation. They were expected to remain there for six months.

On September 14, 1998 [REDACTED] was removed from his foster home and placed with Samantha at Oskki-Ikwe. After eleven weeks at the facility both Samantha and [REDACTED] were discharged because of safety concerns for [REDACTED]. Apparently Samantha was not able to feed him or meet his basic needs.

Samantha returned to the Independent Living program and [REDACTED] returned to his initial foster placement. [REDACTED] has remained in the care of Cree Nation CFS and they planned to seek a permanent Order. They advised that that Samantha had taken no interest in [REDACTED] and had no contact or communication with him or his Guardian Agency.

The court date was scheduled for May 17, 2000 however this Agency is not aware of the outcome. It seems that Samantha did not become involved in that process.

Currently, [REDACTED] is placed in Winnipeg, [REDACTED] however, he will soon be transferred to Island Lake to live with his father's relatives. The Island Lake Agency will take over case management on behalf of Cree Nation.

In terms of Treaty Status and which Agency to serve for Phoenix, Rose indicated that she was unsure of this. Apparently, the family is originally from Shoal River band, however, at some point, Samantha's mother was trying to register with the Pine Creek band. At that time, it was up to Samantha which reserve she would register with, however, it is unclear which one she chose. Subsequently, both Cree Nation CFS (Shoal River) and West Region CFS (Pine Creek) were served court papers.

Please refer to the information on file from Cree Nation CFS for more details regarding Samantha's history and the events that resulted in [REDACTED]'s initial apprehension and eventual removal from Samantha's care.

### Recent Agency Intervention with the Family

On April 25, 2000 the intake worker met with Samantha and Steve at the hospital. Both were in the room with Phoenix and appeared attentive and excited by her. Samantha indicated to the worker that she had "changed" her mind and no longer wanted the worker to leave with her baby. She indicated that her mother and her aunt were on their way to Winnipeg from their home reserve (she did not know which reserve her mother lives on) and would be here at 6 p.m. to pick Phoenix up. The worker indicated that Phoenix is currently under Apprehension with the Agency, therefore, no one can simply come and pick the baby up. Samantha was advised to give her mother the worker's phone number to discuss her interest in caring for Phoenix. It was at this point, that Samantha reiterated that her mother used to abuse her when she was younger and that this is why she was in Agency care. The worker then indicated that her mother would likely not make an appropriate care alternative for Phoenix under these circumstances. Samantha then thought that she had an aunt that may want to care for Phoenix. She was again directed to get anyone who is interested to make contact with the worker to further discuss the matter. The worker invited the parents to help her dress Phoenix and only Steve did so. Samantha seemed only vaguely interested in the process, and when they were walking downstairs, she seemed more interested in chatting and giggling with a friend. The girl that the couple met up with appeared extremely shocked that they had just had a baby. She made it sound as though the couple had kept this a secret on purpose.

The worker talked with hospital staff and the baby's nurse, Be, who indicated that Phoenix is perfectly healthy and there are no specific care instructions. All of the appropriate forms were filled out for Phoenix's discharge, and information was left on the mother and child's charts.

Phoenix was moved from the hospital to Agency shelter, [REDACTED] by the worker without incident.

Beginning on April 28, 2000 Samantha and Steve visited with Phoenix at the Intake office every Friday from 11am-1:15 p.m..

After the visit on April 28, 2000 the intake supervisor and previous case manager conducted interviews with Samantha and Steve. At the couple's request, Nikki Taylor (parents advocate from Boys & Girls Club) was excused for part of the meeting. She rejoined the meeting in its latter stages. During this meeting the parents indicated a desire to continue their common-law relationship with Phoenix being in the family fold. They advised that they came to this position after much deliberation and discussion. The supervisor aggressively challenged the couple on their ambivalence towards parenting this child and the lack of pre-natal care. The "hiding" of the pregnancy and Samantha's seeming disinterest with respect to [REDACTED] were raised as well. Throughout the meeting Samantha remained flat and stoic. She responded to questions in a simple and cautious

manner, often pondering her response for a moment or two before uttering same. Complex questions often received simplistic responses, which failed to shed any meaningful light on issues, especially around why she hid this pregnancy and why she has failed to maintain any contact with [REDACTED]. Her responses heavily consisted of shrugs and "I don't know". Her presentation was suggestive of some developmental or psychological difficulties, however same this need further exploration.

Samantha also had great difficulty expressing why [REDACTED] was in the care of Cree Nation, nor could she account for why she had expressed no desire in maintaining any contact with the child.

Steve presented as a relatively articulate and thoughtful young man. He did share that he himself had been a child permanently in care of Winnipeg Child and Family Services. He was not prepared to consent to a review of his sealed file.

The couple denied any domestic violence or substance abuse.

On May 5, 2000 the couple consented to a three month Temporary Order for Phoenix. The following plan was agreed to.

- 3 month Temporary Order of Guardianship
- This Agency will await further case history from Cree Nation C&FS and incorporate same into the on-going case plan.
- Some form of psychiatric/psychological assessment will need to be undertaken with respect to Samantha - this to be arranged by the Agency or the couple (with Agency approval).
- Both parents are to commence participation in an appropriate parenting program.
- Both parents to attend all weekly visits with Phoenix.

The case plan also suggested that Steve's CIC file might need to be reviewed should he agree to sign the appropriate consents for same.

Nikki Taylor planned to help Samantha locate a psychologist for the assessment and Steve was to approach Andrew Street Centre regarding a parenting program.

The file was transferred to this worker in early May 2000.

On May 5, 2000 Phoenix was moved from the Agency emergency shelter to an Agency foster home, [REDACTED]

On May 11, 2000 Nikki Taylor advised that she was still assisting the parents access resources in order to meet the Agency expectations. She was having difficulty accessing a psychologist to do the assessment, this worker made attempts to have a consultation with Dr. Gary Altman. He unfortunately was not available until late summer, early fall.

By mid May the couple had started a parenting support group at the Andrew Street Center, they attended every week for eight weeks and completed the program.

During May, June and July 2000 Samantha and Nikki Taylor made several attempts to have a psychological assessment completed. Unfortunately they were unsuccessful. It is this worker's sense that part of the reason for this may have had to do with the manner in which Samantha presented to her doctor and others. She did not believe she needs to have the assessment and therefore likely was not helpful when asked questions regarding its purpose.

Through May to August the couple continued to visit with Phoenix on a weekly basis, Tuesdays from 10:30 am to 12:30 p.m.. It was also learned from Nikki Taylor that they continued to attend the Boys and Girls Club's summer programming, they participated in a program focused on job training. Nikki also reported that the couple seemed to be committed to parenting their child and wanted her returned to their care.

The parents were cooperative with this worker however Samantha often appeared angry when she was required to discuss any of the relevant issues with this worker. It was as if that was her general demeanor with those in authority.

By mid July Samantha had still not been successful with having an assessment completed and the 3month order was due to expire on August 5, 2000. Given the concern regarding Samantha's emotional stability was still not addressed the Agency decided to request the child remain in care under a VPA to allow the Samantha more time to have the assessment completed and to allow enough time to properly transition the baby to her parents home. As part of the new plan an Agency in home teaching support worker was assigned to assist with the baby's transition, to assess the parents' parenting abilities, and to provide teaching when needed.

At the end of July 2000, Samantha and Steve consented to the plan and signed a VPA for one month, with the goal to return the child to their care once the issue of Samantha's assessment was addressed.

In early August Marie Belanger, teaching support worker began working with the parents. She was to meet with them twice a week for about two hours. Also access visits increased to twice a week for two hours. By mid August access visits were again increased to longer duration and began to take place at the parents' home. Observations made by the teaching support worker indicated that the parents were attentive to and appropriate with Phoenix. They had also begun to accumulate all of the necessary attire to care for the baby.

8

During a meeting with the supervisor, Angie Balan, on August 29, 2000, it was agreed that the child be returned to the parents' care on September 5, 2000. The Agency would require the parents sign a service agreement outlining what was expected of them while the baby was in their care. The agency support worker would continue to work with the parents and the baby at home.

On September 1, 2000 the parents moved to a larger apartment at 740B Magnus Avenue. The home was clean, sparsely furnished and very tidy.

On September 5, this worker met with the parents and discussed the service agreement, both parents signed the contract, making an agreement to follow the expectations outlined in it. The signed agreement is on file.

On September 5, 2000 Phoenix was discharged for Agency care and placed with both of her parents in the family home on Magnus.

The first condition of the agreement was that Samantha meet with Dr. Altman and follow any recommendations he made. Samantha and Steve both met with Dr. Altman on September 13, 2000. He advised the following:

- Samantha does not present with a diagnosis of depression, he does see her as a "closed book", that she presents as not wishing to tell all of the information there is to tell, he said this could be due to her own style of interacting and/or some of her own life experience
- His impression is that both parents are now committed to each other and to parenting, Samantha indicated that she had not wanted to be pregnant and was somewhat sad about it but since she has decided that this is her child and wants to parent her, she felt she got connected with the child during the visits
- His impression is that the relationship is okay, they both openly shared their feelings for each other and their relationship, Sam feels Steve loves her and they tell each other they love each other
- Dr. Altman does not see the need for any further assessments at this time, he talked to them about commitment but he feels that for now they are committed to one another and to parenting
- He believed the couple's responses and their interactions were genuine
- He saw them sharing parenting responsibilities
- He suspects that there may be some past sexual abuse in her life however she is not ready to address it, this was based on her responses to why she did not see a Dr. when she was pregnant, she expressed concern about a dr. touching her inappropriately, she stated that this was due to watching similar issues on TV
- His impression was that the flat affect people experienced with Samantha is likely due to her method and style of communication, not depression or feelings of sadness. Samantha reported that she no longer had feelings of sadness as she did when she was pregnant

The couple have continued to engage in the services offered by the teaching support worker. Marie reports that the baby is doing well, the parents are very attentive to the baby's needs and they have her on a routine. She continues to meet with the family twice a week at the family home. Marie is in the process of writing her progress report, it should be on the file shortly.

**4. Child's physical and personality description**

Phoenix is a very beautiful five-month-old Aboriginal girl. She has short dark hair and dark eyes. She is becoming very personable and likes to smile often. Her foster mother reported that she was a very easy baby to care for.

**5. Health/Development History**

Phoenix is generally a healthy little girl and all of her immunizations are up to date.

Phoenix is meeting the developmental milestones for her age and she has not demonstrated any difficulties related to the lack of prenatal care Samantha received.

**6. School**

Not applicable due to Phoenix's age.

**7. Assessment**

Phoenix appears to be a typical five month old little girl. She is developmentally on track and is in good health. She has benefited from the stability and nurturing she received in her foster placement. It has contributed to her ability to develop secure attachments with her caregivers. It is hoped that she will attach to her parents, there is some evidence that this has started. This will continue to grow and develop as long as Samantha and Steve remain stable and are able to provide for her needs on a daily basis. The teaching support worker will continue to monitor the couple's abilities and provide assistance when needed.

**8. Case plan**

Phoenix to remain in her parent's care under the conditions listed in the Service Agreement.

Samantha and Steve have demonstrated that they are committed to parenting their Phoenix. They have done so by meeting all of the expectations placed on them at the time the 3-month Order was granted. As a result Phoenix was discharged from care and is now residing with her parents in the family home.

It appears from positive community reports and the in home support worker that Samantha and Steve are able to meet her basic daily needs. However, now that Phoenix is in their care, ongoing assessment of their abilities to effectively meet her needs and provide her with a safe and nurturing home is necessary.

Given the family's gains and personal improvements are still fairly new, the parents are required to follow all of the conditions outlined in the service agreement they signed on September 5, 2000, it is to be reviewed in six months. The following is a list of those conditions:

- 1) Samantha will meet with Dr. Altman to assess her emotional stability and she will follow any recommendations made by Dr. Altman.
- 2) Samantha and Steve will work cooperatively with the Agency in home support worker and will meet with her at least two times weekly
- 3) Samantha and Steve will work cooperatively with the Agency Family Services Worker, this includes meeting with the worker on a regular basis and allow the worker access to the family home. Samantha and Steve will also cooperate with the Agency worker regarding further exploration of issues related to substance abuse and family violence.
- 4) Samantha and Steve will attend and participate in a parenting class that focuses on issues related to child development
- 5) Samantha and Steve will work cooperatively with the public health nurse as a method of gaining information regarding general health issues of small children
- 6) The agency will assist the couple with identifying a pediatrician to use for Phoenix's routine medical issues.

The parents are aware that should they fail to comply with these conditions, it could result in the child being removed from the family home and placed in the care of the Agency.

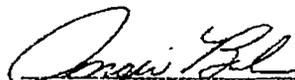
It is not yet known what the outcome of the court case regarding [REDACTED] was. This could be further explored with Samantha and/or Cree nation CFS. Samantha has not expressed any interest to this worker in wanting to pursue having him returned to her care.

9. **Reason for Closure**

This child was discharged from Agency care on September 5, 2000 and returned to the care of her parents, her child in care file is now closed.

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Kerri-Lynn Greeley  
Case Manager



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Angie Balan  
Unit Supervisor