

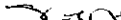
November 24, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Tawana Bourne; I am the proud mother of two boy's ages 4 and 1 years old. The nature of this letter is to provide you with insight of my unfortunate experience with the Department of Families and Children in the hopes of provoking thought that will in turn bring forth positive and relevant change within the system.

On April 4th, 2004 I gave birth to my precious son, Mr. Daheim J'Noah. While in the hospital recovering from the emotional and physical demands of childbirth, I received notice that I would be getting a visit from a DCF Investigator. Reluctant yet agreeable, I allowed the investigator, whose name I learned is Crista St. John, into my hospital room. We discussed the reason for the visit and I agreed for her to come to my home to begin her investigation- or so that is what I was told.

During the end of the visit, I was asked by Crista St. John to sign an agreement form, which I did. At this point I felt as though the visit was complete and it was not time for the Crista St. John to leave and allow me, my son and our family to get on with out new life together. Very antagonistically and stubbornly Crista St. John prolonged the visit. At this point I am agitated, tired and recovering from post partum stressors, and I had an emotional outburst which is reasonably understandable due to the fact that I had just given birth three days prior.

For seemingly no other reason other than Crista St. John's own personal motivators, she immediately dialed 911. As if I was some type of violent, malicious and cruel criminal, I was arrested and spent my first night as a first time mother JAILED when I was supposed to be spending my first day home with my newborn son bonding and enjoying his newborn ~~sent~~ and touch. 

The next day, I went before the judge, with my eyes swollen shut from all the wailing and weeping only to be told that my son was being placed on a 72 hour hold and I would not able to see him hopefully until then. Those three days, which were the longest and darkest days of my life, came and went only for me to be told that the investigation would continue.

My newborn son was taken away from me and placed in foster care. Over the next six months, while the DCF investigation proceeded, I was able to "VISIT" my newborn son for ONE HOUR, ONE DAY, PER WEEK!!!!

Eventually, the case was closed and I was granted full custody of my precious son. Ultimately, I appealed the case and won and my name was removed from the DCF registry.

Crista St. John abusively utilized her powers to steal from me something that I will never be able to get back. I will never be able to lay my first newborn son on my chest during his first days of life and bond with him. I will never be able to witness my son's first smile or bathe him for the first time all because Crista St. John lacked in understanding, care, regard

and empathy when she made the decision to incriminate me based upon her perceptions and biases.

Crista St. John could have and should have dealt with my life and the life of my newborn son in a more humanized and realistic manner. But, she didn't . . . why?

Throughout the DCF System, unfortunately, there are many more Crista St. John's and despondently many more "me's". Lets work together to make certain the those children and families that are receiving services from DCF are actually those children and families who need services from DCF and are not merely targeted based on prejudged and perceived notions and motivations.

As we go forth to improve upon the business of DCF, my suggestions are that:

- * Regulators should put in place a standardized and universal procedure to go about handling and responding to reports and handling cases before decisions are made
- * Investigative decisions should be reviewed and approved or disapproved of in a more logical in-depth manner before children are removed and displaced from their home
- * Parental and guardian rights should be reviewed and understood upon further action of DCF.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Tawana M. Bourne
Middletown, CT