***WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT TAMARA AND BRITT AT ADJUDICATION:***

Once entering foster care, the children were checked out medically. The findings for Britt were that he was malnourished, developmentally delayed, had an eye infection, and had a fever when he went to the ER on the day he was removed. He was later diagnosed with a Vitamin D deficiency. The foster parents administered the medication as described and followed up with all checkups and appointments. He was being assessed for Early Steps. His health was improving in short time between continued custody and adjudication, and he was trying to talk and walk more.

Tamara’s examination showed some bruising in various stages of healing on her back, waist, stomach, and neck. She had an iron deficiency and previously undiagnosed asthma. The pediatrician also made a referral for a psychological evaluation because of some symptoms which could be ADHD or PTSD. The evaluation had been scheduled but not conducted at the time of the adjudication.

Because of the nature of the allegations, a CAC forensic interview was conducted on Tamara. In addition to the information we already knew, we learn the following:

Tamara is a good student, and used to be a great one. This year has been hard, though. She has not done as well with her grades because she has too many other things to worry about. When she is at school, she can’t even focus on what the teachers are saying. Before this year, she was always close to her teachers. She was one of the first girls in her class to wear a bra because she began to develop breasts at around 9 years old. Last year, in the 5th grade, every boy in her class touched her breasts as if they were not even attached to her body. She got a reputation for fighting because she started hitting the boys when they touched her. There was a teacher, Ms. Williams, that she could go to and talk about what was going on. This year, she was at a different school and didn’t know any of her teachers well enough to talk to them.

Tamara told her mom about the boys in her class touching her breasts, and Sophia relayed the story to her boyfriend, Charles, who thought it was funny. Sophia and Charles had just started seeing each other at that time. He asked Tamara about it when they were alone one day, and Tamara was very uncomfortable. Nevertheless, she revealed to him that she didn’t even like boys, and the more they touched her, the less she liked them. Charles asked her if she was a lesbian, and she said she didn’t know what that was. He then began touching her like the boys in her class, which she thought was his way of teasing her about the whole thing. But it never stopped. Then he moved in with them and started getting into her bed at night while Sophia slept. Sophia was a hard sleeper when she had been drinking, and that was pretty much every day.

Besides getting in the bed with her at night, Charles also did other things. Like, he would twist the skin at the bottom of her neck right underneath her hair where no one could see how red it was. When he did that, he pulled her close to him and grabbed her on the back or waist and whispered to her that she was stupid and ugly and not worth the air she was breathing. She had bruises on her back and sides where he grabbed her. No one ever saw those other than Tamara until she went to the doctor after moving in with Ms. Laura. She would have shown her mother, except Sophia had her own share of bruises from Charles. Tamara didn’t think that bruises would bother Sophia since she had not done anything to keep Charles away from herself. Every bruise Tamara saw on Sophia made her mad at Charles, but also made her hate Sophia a little bit. Sophia brought him into their lives, and so it was at least a little bit her fault that they were in this mess.