

COVENANT CHILDREN'S HOME
PRINCETON, ILLINOIS
Mar. 26, 1963

Re: Robert Mitchell,
B. 10-12-54

Current situation and need for evaluation

Robert was kept out of school by his mother last October for a period of two weeks, and again was not enrolled in school from December 22nd, which was the beginning of Christmas vacation, until February 26, 1963, when he was apprehended by authorities and placed in Audy Home in Chicago. Our agency received custody through a court hearing on February 22, 1963 in Family Court. The child's mother, Mrs. Joyce Mitchell, is a highly irrational person, has been hospitalized for a mental disorder, and is currently reacting in a manner to suggest further mental break-down. During the two months that Robert lived with his mother it is difficult to know all of the behavior and social situations which could cause emotional problems for this young child.

With all of this upset now, as well as ~~the~~ 5 years of institutional living at our Children's Home, Robert remains outwardly rather calm and collected and does not show any of the expected signs of anxiety. In fact, he shows a definite ability to control his emotions, is able to flash a smile to the right person at the right time, etc., but I feel that there is no genuine feeling behind this. This was very evident at the court hearing when Robert, in coming from the Audy Home to the court building, was able to smile properly and speak in controlled tones to his mother, his grandmother, court caseworker and myself each separately, but with little or no further display of feeling.

There is evidence of some withdrawal from normal social situations here at the Children's Home, and it appears that he is progressively finding himself apart from the other children, sitting and reading magazines, books, etc.

This together with a slight decline in ability in school, prompts this need for evaluation. We would feel that it would be almost impossible for any person to hold within himself all of the emotion which must be present due to the numerous traumatic experiences this young child has had to face in his lifetime.

Family History

Both of Robert's parents are highly educated individuals, each of them hold at least a BA degree, with the father securing an MA degree in the social science field from Northwestern University a number of years ago.

Robert came to the children's home in January 1958 on a referral from the mother. Some months prior to this the boy's father had ^(see) permanently disabled physically and mentally by a self inflicted gun shot wound to the brain. He continues to

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reside under 24 hours care in Atlanta, Georgia.

Mrs. Mitchell has been an unstable person emotionally for a number of years, and even at the time of referral in 1958 she demonstrated signs of potential emotional break-down. She became progressively worse until she was hospitalized in November 1959. She was released from Galesburg Research Hospital sometime in 1961 and received restoration of civil rights in March 1962. There has been tremendous amount of conflict between Mrs. Mitchell and her mother, Mrs. Hazel Roberts. These 2 individuals have been for a long time "fighting" for the affection and control of the child Robert. Each sends cards and letters to the child periodically and visits rather often. They shower the child with many gifts, etc, and although we have discouraged this display of gift giving it is felt that each is attempting to receive more than the other from the child. *not give the other.*

It is my evaluation that the child's mother is so involved in her own emotional problems that she is unable to give any love or affection to this child, but is merely using him as a tool to get back at the world for hurting her, etc. There is never a display of emotion for her son in normal ways, but I have witnessed her on several occasions leaving our Home without so much as a good-bye or an affectionate hug or kiss to the youngster.

At the present time the mother will not visit the child here at the Home because she does not want to lower herself to come to our institution. This has only been since the court placed Robert at our Home. She is attempting through her attorneys to secure legal rights on this youngster again.

Child's personal history

There has existed in the family background passionate search for knowledge, and when Robert came our Home at the age of 3 he was quite advanced for his years. The mother has constantly urged him to excel in school, etc, and feels that the education that he is receiving here in Princeton is in no ways up to standards which she would want for her son.

Physically Robbie was a very unhealthy child when he first came to the home and was suffering from rather extreme asthma. His mother is also an asthmatic.

Through the years this condition has been completely eliminated, and we would feel that he is an average child physically today.

Scholastically he is a rather good student, although his grades for this 3rd year are rather incomplete because of so much absence. He is perhaps working below

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his A and B grades of previous years. We feel that under normal conditions he would score in at least ~~above~~ average category.

During the past 6 months we feel that the boy's mother has been filling this youngster with a constant barrage of bitterness and hostility toward any and all people who stand in her way. She has also attempted to straighten Robert out on many of the facts of the family history, and has indicated that she wanted to go to the grave of her father and dig it up and prove that her father is deceased, etc. These things have all been said in this boy's presence, and we do not know what other things she has been pumping into his mind over the past months.

As has been indicated previously, with all of this going on the child acts as if he is completely unaffected by all this. I cannot believe that this is not affecting the personality structure of this young boy.

Conclusion

In making this referral at this time we would hope that the tests and evaluations could give us a greater understanding of the personality structure and make-up of this young child. After as many years in the institutional setting as this boy has lived, it is wondered if we should think in terms of foster home placement, or if this is ~~contrary~~ indicated by the test results. It is also felt that because of our involvement with the court, and with undoubtedly a further court hearing in the near future, that some statement of prognosis would be in order as well.

by John E. Liljegren
Caseworker

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