

Father finds stolen child with girl, 12

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — Detective work by the father of an 11-month-old girl taken from a park swimming pool led to the arrest of a 12-year-old girl "who just wanted a baby," police said.

Horace Grant, whose daughter Crystal was abducted Wednesday evening, took time off from his job as a financial analyst to search for his daughter.

Three days later, Grant took police to the house where the 12-year-old girl lived. Sgt. Norman White of the police department juvenile division described the 12-year-old as a "real streetwise kid who just wanted a baby."

The 12-year-old, who has not been identified, was arrested Saturday afternoon and transferred to the custody of the Harris County juvenile probation office, said Sgt. M.L. Thomas of the juvenile division.

Thomas said the infant was playing in MacGregor Park when her 13-year-old baby sitter agreed to let the 12-year-old girl and her male companion take the baby to get fried chicken. They never returned.

Grant said he was told by a Metropolitan Transit Authority official that the girl was seen with the baby on a bus near the Eastex freeway.

"Once I figured out that she was in a bad part of town, I thought I could get more out of the people than the police," Grant said.

He and other family members went door-to-door, showing residents pictures of the baby and a composite drawing of the girl and asking if they had seen them.

Many said they knew the girl and had seen her carrying the baby, Grant said. A woman who worked at a nightclub gave Grant the girl's address.

When Grant and police arrived early Saturday, the girl and the infant were not at home, Thomas said, adding that the girl's stepfather promised they would be there when officers returned Saturday afternoon. The infant was taken to the police station and reunited with her parents.

Youth gang wars force end of Watts Summer Festival

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Warring youth gangs ignited fighting and looting that forced authorities to cancel the final day of the Watts Summer Festival, held to commemorate the 1965 riots that left 34 people dead, sheriff's department officials said Sunday.

Sgt. Wesley McBride of the sheriff's department gang detail said at least 200 gang members were at the festival Saturday night.

"They had been coming in all day," he said. "They rushed into the park in side streets all at once. We can't stop them from going into the park, it's a public place."

He said at least two gangs were involved, but he declined to identify them while the investigation continues. Six to eight youths were arrested for illegal possession of handguns and a "variety" of clubs and knives were confiscated, McBride said.

Festival chairman Bert Hammond condemned the violence as "nothing but hoodliganism."

No one was seriously injured, but some concessionaires reported several thousand dollars in lost merchandise and an estimated \$11,000 in festival sound equipment was stolen. Sheriff's Sgt. Skip Ryzow said authorities revoked the permit for Sunday's activities, the first time the festival had closed early.

Hammond and several other board members had wanted to proceed Sunday with a scheduled concert

and a memorial service for those who died in 1965, but the board decided later to drop the events.

Hammond said only 27 juveniles were involved.

However, two people from Community Youth Gang Services — a local agency supported with county and city funds to help control gang violence — said at a news conference that as many as 500 gang members were present.

"Different gangs came here at the same time," said Gary Barner of the gang services agency. "They saw each other here and they exploded."

The outbreak came about 7 p.m. after a smoggy day with temperatures in the 90s — the same atmosphere that prevailed 17 years ago during the four days of rioting in Los Angeles' black ghetto. The 1965 riots injured more than 1,000 people, caused more than \$40 million in property damage and became a national symbol of black frustration.

Saturday's violence — which officials termed a "major disturbance" — was the most serious since the festival began in 1966.

A sheriff's helicopter circled overhead and ordered the crowd to disperse. All but 150 of the estimated 2,000 people left before a phalanx of deputies cleared the park at about 8:20 p.m., sheriff's deputies said.

One 19-year-old man was arrested for investigation of battery on a peace officer. Five people were arrested for investigation of public drunkenness, he said.

Child courier service accused of selling infants

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — A founder of a group providing escorts for adoptive babies heading to new homes in the United States said Sunday her business has been wrecked by a story in a London newspaper alleging children had been sold.

Jody Darragh, founder of Americans for International Aid, denied allegations contained in a story in the newspaper, *Mail on Sunday*, that the organization has sold infants to American families at a cost of \$3,480 each.

"Our group is a nonprofit organization run by volunteers. All our escorts get back is the joy of escorting a child to its parents," Darragh said. "They are reimbursed only for their expenses."

She said she feared the organization will have to stop its escort services because of the *Mail's* story.

The staff of the weekly *Mail on Sunday* has Sunday and Monday off, and calls Sunday to the newspaper in London were not answered. The answering service at the *Mail on Sunday's* New York number said no one would be available until Monday.

The London tabloid reported that the organization sold infants found in Calcutta slums to American families. It said the babies were carried on scheduled British Airways flights by off-duty flight attendants.

In London, a spokesman for the state-owned airline said Sunday, "As far as British Airways is concerned, we have suspended flights involving the children pending clarification from organizers of the scheme in the United States." He added that U.S. airlines including Trans World Airlines and Northwest Orient Airlines also were involved.

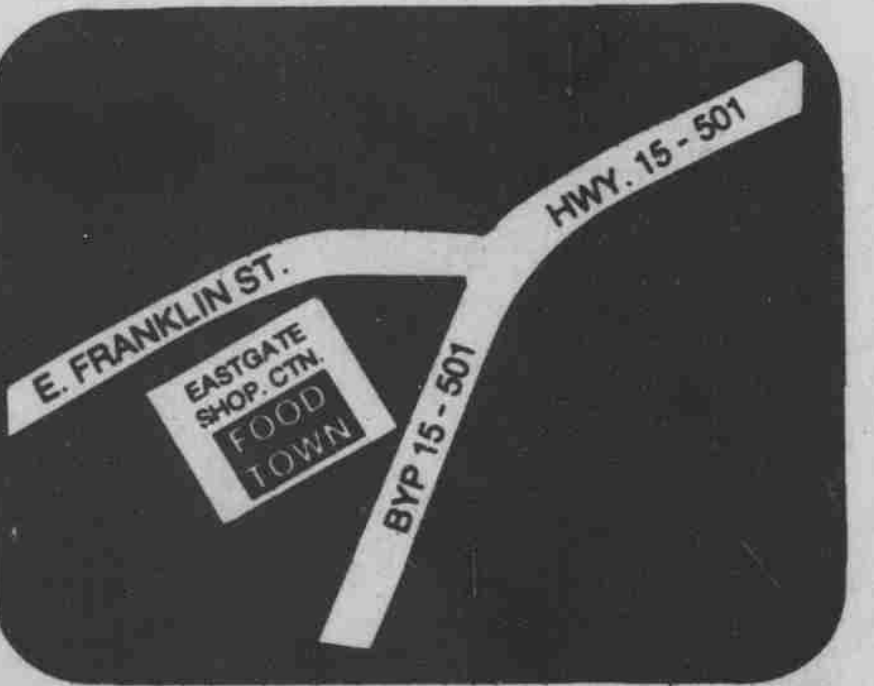
Darragh said the group, which includes about 1,000 volunteer airline employees and spouses, provides escorts to pick up children in other countries who have been adopted by American families through a licensed adoption agency. Adoption agencies contact her group after arranging the adoption, she said.

The escorts are reimbursed for their expenses, which are reduced by the travel discounts the escorts receive as airline employees or spouses, Darragh said.



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