



Call for Full Investigation into Amelya Frances Kirkpatrick's Adoption in Utah

According to a court document obtained by PEAR, on February 9, 2010, Scott and Karen Banks, former owners of adoption agency Focus on Children, were allowed to adopt another child, originally from China. The Banks were indicted on 135 Federal counts in 2007 for a fraudulent adoption scheme in Samoa. In 2009, they pled guilty to Aiding and Abetting the Improper Entry of an Alien in a plea deal made with the US Attorney's office in Utah. They were given a sentence of five years probation during which time they are forbidden to participate in the adoption business and are required to make payment into a trust for the victims.

The recent adoption occurred after evidence of their illegal activities with their Samoan adoption program were put on record in Utah courts. Also supplied was information regarding the Banks two previously adopted Romanian children.

According to numerous media sources and their now-adult Romanian daughter's own affidavit, this child and her sibling were flown to Samoa by Scott Banks and left without legal documentation in 2000, leaving these adoptees in a legal limbo. In addition, according to an affidavit given by their caregiver in Samoa, the Banks have had no contact with either child since their arrival, nor have they supported the children in any way since abandoning them in Samoa.

Furthermore, a third child of the Banks, suffering from cerebral palsy and also adopted from Romania, has been alleged in various documents to have been severely neglected in their home. This child was placed in a group home in Utah.

PEAR believes that anyone convicted of crimes involving children should be barred from the possibility of adopting any other children. We also believe that any parents convicted of or with a history of legitimate allegations of child abuse and neglect should be barred from adopting children.

PEAR opposes any practice that does not protect the rights of the child to live a life free from abuse and neglect with qualified and loving adoptive parents. To not hold these rights paramount in an adoption proceeding undermines every moral and ethical standard that each child deserves.

We are sponsoring a petition to be sent to the Governor of Utah asking his office to open an investigation into how and why this family was allowed to adopt another child given their dubious history. If you agree with the statements made please take a moment to sign the petition.

<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/utahadoption/>

More information about this case including official documents can be found here:

<http://poundpuplegacy.org/node/22526>

Measure passed by PEAR's board 2/19/2010