

Woman Who Abducted Grandson Is Paroled

The Washington Post

May 13, 2004 Thursday, Final Edition

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Section: Anne Arundel Extra; T03

Length: 511 words

Byline: Eric Rich, Washington Post Staff Writer

Body

Afaf N. Khalifa, imprisoned for helping to **abduct** one of her **grandsons** from Anne Arundel County and taking him to Egypt, has been granted **parole** and later this month will be turned over to immigration authorities for deportation. An appeal of her 2003 conviction is pending, and questions about Khalifa's future remain uncertain.

But with Khalifa, who kept a family home in San Diego, now facing possible deportation to Egypt, a parallel but opposite result is being sought in courts in Cairo.

Michael Shannon, the father of the boy she helped kidnap, has asked an Egyptian court to compel authorities there to enforce U.S. court orders and return Adam Shannon, 7, and his brother Jason, 3, to their father.

The boys are living with their mother, Nermeen Shannon, who had legal custody of Jason but not Adam when she and her mother flew to New York with them and then on to Egypt in August 2001.

Police have an arrest warrant for Nermeen Shannon. The United States and Egypt do not have an extradition treaty.

The court case in Cairo is a measure of last resort for Michael Shannon -- who has since been granted custody of Jason -- but he gives it long odds.

"I don't know what's going on in Egypt," said Shannon, a computer consultant who has been thrust into the national spotlight because of the case. "I can't even get the State Department to look into it."

The case has been repeatedly delayed. What's more, he said, the family is prominent in Egypt, where their acquaintances are said to include President Hosni Mubarak. "The law does not apply to their family or their class of society," Shannon said.

Shannon has retained Egyptian lawyer Nabil Hilmy, dean of law at Egypt's Zagazig University.

The prominent legal scholar drew attention last year when he announced his intention to sue "the Jews of the world" for allegedly stealing gold in biblical times during the Jewish exodus from Egypt. He told a government weekly that the value would be in the trillions of dollars, suggesting a schedule of repayment over perhaps 1,000 years, media reports say.

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Nermeen Shannon could not be reached for comment. She has said in the past that Adam is learning Arabic, playing soccer and swimming at a private sports club. He has a full-time nanny and attends "one of the most expensive and prestigious" private schools in Cairo, the mother has said.

Michael Shannon said he may prevail in court if he can show that his ex-wife is not a fit parent. A hearing in the Cairo case is scheduled for June 3, Shannon's lawyer said in an e-mail.

Meanwhile, Khalifa's lawyer, William C. Brennan Jr., said the family is pleased by the parole. Khalifa was sentenced to 10 years in prison after her conviction in January 2003, but a judicial panel later reduced that to three years.

At Khalifa's original sentencing, the trial judge said her prison time might be reduced if Nermeen Shannon returned with the child. That, Brennan said, put Nermeen Shannon "in the difficult position of having to choose between the best interests of her children and the best interests of her mother."

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: DEPORTATION (90%); ARRESTS (90%); LAW COURTS & TRIBUNALS (89%); **PAROLE** (89%); EXTRADITION (89%); LITIGATION (89%); SENTENCING (78%); CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS (78%); GRANDCHILDREN (78%); IMMIGRATION LAW (77%); LAWYERS (77%); FAMILY LAW (76%); CHILD CUSTODY & SUPPORT (75%); IMMIGRATION (72%); LARCENY & THEFT (72%); EDUCATION SYSTEMS & INSTITUTIONS (72%); ARREST WARRANTS (67%); JEWS & JUDAISM (66%); PRIVATE SCHOOLS (65%); RELIGION (61%); TREATIES & AGREEMENTS (52%); SOCCER (50%)

Industry: LAWYERS (77%); EDUCATION SYSTEMS & INSTITUTIONS (72%); PRIVATE SCHOOLS (65%)

Person: HOSNI MUBARAK (58%)

Geographic: CAIRO, EGYPT (91%); CALIFORNIA, USA (79%); EGYPT (96%); UNITED STATES (79%)

Load-Date: May 13, 2004