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The Taking of Logan Marr

The tragic story of a 5-year-old girl, taken from a mother who never abused her, whose death while in foster care prompted the state of Maine to reexamine its child welfare policies.



An Interview with Christy Marr



An Interview with Sally Schofield



Police Interviews with Sally Schofield (with audio excerpts)



Statement from the Maine DHS on the Logan Marr case



Video Excerpt (5:00)
WINDOWS REAL
HIGH LOW HIGH LOW

On Jan. 31, 2001, 5-year-old Logan Marr was found dead in the basement of her foster mother's home in Chelsea, Maine. The foster mother, [Sally Schofield](#), a highly respected former caseworker for Maine's Department of Human Services (DHS), would later be tried and convicted of manslaughter after police determined that Logan had died from asphyxiation after being bound with duct tape and strapped into a high chair in the basement.



Logan Marr

Sally was the third foster mother to take in Logan since she was removed from her birth mother, [Christy Marr](#), in August 1998. The teenaged Christy had moved in with her mother, Kathy Baker, shortly after Logan's birth, and the two had fought constantly over how to raise the baby. It was Kathy who initiated Christy's first contact with Maine's Department of Human Services; in May 1996, she called

the department to report her concerns about Logan's safety. According to DHS records, Kathy told an intake worker that she had always worried "that Christy is too immature and troubled to be a good parent to Logan," and that "Christy can't or won't put Logan's needs before her own. Kathy said that Christy screams

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and hollers at the baby all the time and handles her extremely roughly."

DHS sent caseworker Diane Sanborn to assess Logan's situation. Despite Kathy's allegations, she did not find anything that immediately concerned her about Christy's parenting. She did believe that Christy should work on what DHS considered an unhealthy relationship with her boyfriend, an admitted drug user.

The department told Christy that in order to maintain custody of Logan, she would have to begin living under a strict set of rules: Any boyfriends or individuals allowed to stay over in her apartment would have to be cleared with DHS. And she would have to cut off her troubled relationship with her mother. Kathy had married a man named Mitch, whom DHS had been told, falsely, had been convicted of sexually assaulting a teenage girl years before. As long as Kathy and Mitch stayed together, DHS warned, Christy would have to stay away or risk losing custody of Logan.

Christy tried to stay away from her mother, but she had few other sources of emotional support. Inevitably, she ended up drifting back. One day, she left Logan with a babysitter at her mother's apartment. Mitch, who had previously moved out, turned up and was seen by a neighbor, who called DHS. The department immediately sought custody of Logan, citing Christy's failure to protect her from potentially unsafe people.

Hearing of the department's plan to remove Logan, Christy took her daughter and fled, heading south toward Boston. But she soon realized her efforts were futile, and turned around and returned to Maine the same day. By the next morning, two caseworkers had come and removed 2-and-a-half-year-old Logan into state custody. She was soon placed in a foster home.

Now pregnant with her second child, Christy had to prove to DHS that she could change if she wanted to regain Logan and keep her new baby. A new agreement was drawn up, requiring her to sever all ties with her mother and to attend a variety of counseling services, including one-on-one counseling, parenting skills classes, and job training. She was to stay in a group home until the birth of her child, and then locate appropriate housing for herself and the children.

After the birth of her baby girl, Bailey, Christy moved into a new apartment. She communicated with her mother only through videotapes that she made, showing Kathy the new baby and the apartment. Her efforts to stay away from Kathy and fulfill the requirements of the agreement reassured her DHS caseworker, and after seven months the department returned Logan.



Logan and Bailey

But Christy had paid a heavy price to regain her daughter -- she had cut herself off from the only lasting relationship in her life. Now completely on her own, responsible for two young girls, 21-year-old Christy set out to reunite with her father, who lived a thousand miles away in Florida. Her father had become alienated from the family after an ugly divorce in which Christy had accused him of molesting her, an accusation her father denied and that she later recanted.

Putting the past behind her, Christy and her girls moved in with her father and his new family. For a while, things were good. With something approaching a normal family life, Logan appeared to thrive. But Christy chafed under her father's rules, and her attempt at reconciliation soon failed. After nine weeks, she and the

girls returned to Maine.

With no job and no home, Christy moved back in with her mother, and attached herself to another boyfriend of questionable character, a convicted burglar named Paul. Before long, they were married.



Christy with Logan and Bailey

When DHS learned of Christy's trip to Florida -- which in the department's view put the girls in jeopardy by exposing them to an accused sex offender -- and her new relationship, they reopened her case and assigned it to a new caseworker, Allison Peters. Peters soon received a tip -- never confirmed -- that Paul had hit Christy in front of Logan. Peters moved quickly, arriving unannounced at Christy's door with two police officers and a court order to remove the girls. Logan and Bailey were driven to a foster home two hours away. It would be the last time Logan would ever live with her mother.

Determined to get her girls back, Christy divorced Paul, worked two jobs, and attended mandatory classes and therapy sessions, riding for hours in DHS vans to get to them. Logan and Bailey were living with a new foster mother, Mary Beth Anderson, and 4-year-old Logan was beginning to show the effects of separation from her mother. According to Mary Beth's journal, Logan asked from the beginning when her mother would "get her back." That month, Logan was seen by a therapist five times. The therapist listed the themes in Logan's play as "Mommy and Daddy fighting; Mommy and Daddy losing their baby; Big sisters taking care of little sisters; and Someone took me away but I don't know why." According to Mary Beth's journals, Logan began to have raging temper tantrums. She writes, "Logan's outrage is still bad. The child has anger by the ton. Logan pushes and pushes and if I don't react, pushes further with whining and screaming and punching with closed fists and kicking."

Concerned that Logan might have been abused some time in her past, Mary Beth brought Logan for an evaluation to the Spurwink Clinic, which specializes in child abuse. Despite extensive examinations, counselors found no evidence of any physical or sexual abuse. They did recommend, however, that Logan receive counseling to cope with the separation from her mother.

As Christy was struggling with the loss of her girls, and Mary Beth struggled with Logan's increasing tantrums, DHS caseworker **Sally Schofield** had begun to think about adopting a little girl of her own. She had two boys: Derek, 14, from a previous marriage, and 1-year-old Shaynen. But she had always longed for a girl. DHS discourages its caseworkers from adopting children from within the system, but Sally was determined to be an exception. She enrolled with her husband in a mandatory training program for adoptive parents, and began the process of getting approved as an adoptive home.

After a physical incident between Mary Beth and Logan -- an incident both Mary Beth and the department refuse to discuss -- DHS moved quickly to get the girls into another foster home. Caseworker Allison Peters called Sally and asked if she would be willing to take the girls temporarily. According to Sally, it was understood at that point that DHS would pursue terminating Christy's parental rights, freeing the girls up for eventual adoption. The girls moved in with Sally and her husband in early September 2000. Though she was concerned at what she saw as signs of neglect in Logan -- her need to take care of her younger sister and her quick attachment to her new caretakers -- Sally says

she fell in love with the girls that first weekend.

As Sally sought to bond with the girls, DHS cut back Christy's visits with them. She would have to provide her own transportation, though she didn't have a car. She wasn't allowed to know Sally's last name, address, or occupation. According to Sally, DHS said this secrecy was required because of "safety concerns."



Christy, Bailey and Logan during a visit

Discouraged, Christy began to falter. She missed classes and counseling appointments. In a fit of pique, she remarried Paul, the man whose presence had led to the removal of Logan and Bailey. At one point, she stormed out of a meeting with her caseworker and therapist. Her therapist wrote to Allison Peters:

Christy's progress the past five months has been slow at best. She has missed several appointments blaming transportation and oversleeping (our appointments are at 2 p.m.). Recently when cut off from seeing her daughters Christy 'fell sick' not leaving the apartment or calling me for help. Christy has on a regular basis blamed others for her problems. Can't pay the rent -- no job. Can't get GED -- have to be available for my girls. Can't get a driver's license -- no one will lend me a car. The bad guys have changed since [the beginning of her counseling], but little else has. I hate to think that her relationship with her little girls will be on this yo-yo schedule for so long.

The girls, meanwhile, were settling in at Sally's. Though not rich herself, Sally was able to give Logan things that Christy had not: swimming lessons and dance classes. But Logan didn't seem happy. Her rages continued, and escalated. According to Sally, they were often particularly bad after visits with Christy. DHS notes from an October visit read:

Logan kept telling mom throughout the visit that she was her favorite person in the whole world. As the visit was ending, Logan ran to mom and said, 'I want to go home with you.' At one visit, Logan asked Christy if she knew what Sally looked like. Christy said, 'Yes, I've seen her' and Logan responded, 'I don't like her.'

As Logan's behavior deteriorated, Sally found herself at a loss. Logan would rage out of control, screaming, kicking, and thrashing so violently that Sally was afraid she would hurt herself. Suddenly, all the confidence Sally had accumulated as a parent and a DHS caseworker seemed to vanish. "I was supposed to be trained," she told FRONTLINE. "I was supposed to be educated. How come I couldn't help her? How come I didn't know what to do?"



Logan having a tantrum

At her supervised visits with the girls Christy could see that Logan wasn't doing well. She was discouraged by DHS, though, from discussing what was making Logan unhappy. At their videotaped Christmas visit on Dec. 18, 2000, while a DHS supervisor sat listening, Logan stopped opening her gifts and told Christy that Sally had hurt her. She squeezed her cheeks together with one hand, and said, "She did this to me, and I cried, and it hurts me. She did it to my sister, too." When Christy tried to find out more about what happened, she says the DHS supervisor shook her head, forbidding her from going into detail about the incident. In early

January 2001, during another supervised visit, Logan again told Christy that Sally had handled her roughly, wrapping her up in a blanket. Again, Christy was signalled not to pursue the matter.

DHS rules require caseworkers to visit foster homes quarterly, and to promptly investigate any complaint of physical abuse. Logan's caseworker, Allison Peters, did neither. Peters declined FRONTLINE's request for an interview.

By January, Sally had quit her job as a caseworker, and DHS had decided to pave the way for her adoption of the girls, despite clear and repeated warnings that she was having a difficult time dealing with Logan. Discouraged, Christy had begun to believe that she would never get her children back. She wrote them [a letter](#), which she planned to give them at their next scheduled visit, on Jan. 31, 2001:

Dear Logan and Bailey, my sweet little ladies. I think of you so much and often it seems hard to believe you girls have been gone so long now. In a month or so from now, I stand the chance to lose the both of you forever. And it's been no picnic, but this is not your fault. It's mine, and mine alone. I want the both of you to know that no matter what happens, I love you, and will never stop fighting for you.

The girls never received the letter. The visit was cancelled because of a snowstorm. And that evening, Logan died in Sally's basement.

According to Sally, Logan had been in one of her rages in the afternoon. "I asked her if she needed to scream and she said yes," Sally said. "I said, 'OK, well then let's put you some place where you can scream.'" Sally put Logan in an unfinished portion of her basement in a high chair. She left her there for over an hour, she says, periodically checking on her. When she came down to check after starting dinner, she says she found Logan lying in a heap on the floor, still confined to her high chair. She wasn't breathing. She was rushed to Maine General Hospital, where she was pronounced dead.

That night, the police came to [interview Sally](#). She told them she thought Logan must have knocked herself over in the high chair and hit her head. Although she claimed that Logan had not been restrained in the high chair, in a subsequent search of Sally's house, the detectives found evidence that raised doubts about her story. Strewn amid boxes in the dank basement were clumps of duct tape, some 40 feet in all. Police tests revealed that the tape had been looped repeatedly around Logan's body and head, and across her mouth. Tufts of her hair were stuck to the tape. And an autopsy revealed that Logan had not died from a blow to the head, but from asphyxiation.



Logan Marr's gravestone

The police returned and [confronted Sally with the new evidence](#). At first, she maintained that Logan had tangled herself in the duct tape, but her story soon crumbled. Sally was arrested and charged with depraved indifference, murder, and manslaughter. A prosecution affidavit alleged that she had taped Logan into her high chair, and taped her mouth shut. Sally waived her right to a jury trial, and a judge concluded that she had not intentionally killed Logan. But he found her guilty of manslaughter and sentenced her to 20 years in prison.

Caseworker Allison Peters testified at the trial, but was never asked about her failure to respond to Logan's complaints about Sally. She was placed on paid administrative leave for a month,

and has since left DHS. No formal disciplinary action was taken against any DHS employees in connection with Logan's death, although the case prompted the state legislature to initiate two investigations of the department.

Bailey was moved to a third foster home after her sister's death. For the next year, Christy battled with DHS to get her back. Finally, in February 2002, she was returned to Christy for good.

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