

VIOLATION: UNJUST CHILD REMOVAL

There is a woman that was interviewed who was employed by UTC as part of the janitorial staff on campus. She was fired from UTC in May of 2007 because her daughter became sick and due to the fact that she is a single mother, she had to stay home with her daughter during her time of illness. She has ended up on food stamps and Medicaid because of this. Due to losing her job she could not pay her car payment in a timely manner, the car was repossessed. Now she has no job and no transportation to get a new job. One factor that also played an important role in her case was the fact that she lived in public housing which was good when she lost her job because her rent decreased but on the other hand, the housing unit was so far out that transportation was a huge issue because her apartment was not near the bus line. After two months of being unemployed, her electricity was cut off. This took place on a Friday evening so she was unable to call anyone for assistance. Monday morning the Department of Family and Children's Services was at her door to remove her daughter. The charge was failure to protect and child endangerment. When you live in public housing if any of the utilities are cut off the housing authority gives you a three day notice to regain your utilities or face eviction. On top of that DFAC's was called because there was a child living in the house with no electricity. This includes no lights, no heat, and no air. With all this and the refrigerator not working, they considered this to be an endangerment to the child. Her daughter was taken away that day. Not even one social worker contacted her to try and assist her with her utilities. The next day she received her eviction notice to vacate the premises. Now she is homeless and is fighting the court for custody of her own child. One more thing I would like to mention is the fact that when something like this happens, it is not solved in one court appearance. She has been summoned to court three times already. Keep in mind that she has no transportation and no way to wash her

clothes for court. What is she to do at this point? It would seem that she is fighting a losing battle.