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Report of Psychological Assessment

**** CONFIDENTIAL ****

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Client's Name: Yesica Silva

Date of Birth: 07/12/2016

Date of Assessment: 08/24/2020

Date of Report: 09/01/2020

Assessment Procedures: Semi-structured biopsychosocial interview with parents

Clinical observation of child

Projective drawings

Evaluator's Qualifications and Assessment Methodology:

I am a clinical psychologist licensed in the states of California and Nevada. Since 2007, I have conducted and supervised over two thousand reports for United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and for Immigration Court. I have a private practice in San Diego, where in addition to my forensic work, I provide psychotherapy to adults, couples, and families, specializing in issues around acculturation, immigration, and trauma. I have published a number of articles and op-eds on cultural diversity and immigration, and have been a guest speaker at conferences put on by the American Immigration Lawyers Association. Forensic evaluators, such as myself, are specifically trained to carry out psychological evaluations that answer a psycho-legal question and to conceptualize and focus on the legally relevant aspects of the client's presentation. Accordingly, this report is based on a one-time visit and a thorough assessment of this client's mental health status within the context of the legal issue at hand. Its conclusions and recommendations are based on my professional training and expertise, and any limitations to my findings will be clearly noted, if applicable¹. For further qualifications, please refer to my curriculum vitae.

¹ The Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology and the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct set forth by the American Psychological Association state that conducting a psychological evaluation of a current or former patient constitutes a multiple relationship and it is thus objectionable. In other words, evaluating a patient whom the evaluator also treats with regular therapy sessions compromises the integrity of

Identifying Information and Reason for Referral:

Yesica Silva is a 4-year-old, second generation Hispanic female. She was brought in for a psychological evaluation to assess her current psychological status, the quality of her relationship with her caregivers, and how her father's removal from the United States due to his immigration proceedings would affect her – practically and emotionally.

Background Information:

Yesica was born to parents Maria Pedraza and Pablo Silvain San Diego, California. Mr. Silva was born and raised in Guadalajara, Mexico. He grew up in an intact household and is one of 11 siblings. He immigrated to the United States at the age of 15 in order to join some of his older siblings, who had been residing in California for some time. Mr. Silva explained that he suffered a great deal of domestic violence at the hands of his father, whom he described as an alcoholic who has always mistreated his children. He started working at a furniture factory until he eventually moved to San Diego, where he has resided since 1995. Ms. Pedraza, a native of Distrito Federal, Mexico, came to the United States with her first husband at the age of 17. Throughout her 10 years of marriage, she gave birth to five children. Ms. Pedraza described enduring years of emotional and sexual abuse, which ended when her first husband left the family to be with another woman approximately 13 years ago.

Mr. Silva and Ms. Pedraza met while they were both children, as they lived nearby. They reconnected in 2012, when Ms. Pedraza separated from her first husband and offered to rent a room to Mr. Silva to help pay her rent. They developed a romantic relationship and in 2016 they had their daughter Yesica, who was born on Ms. Pedraza's birthday. Ms. Pedraza reported that she has struggled with depression for many years and takes antidepressants. She attributed the numerous complications she experienced with her pregnancy to her medications, but expressed her gratitude for her daughter's health.

Mr. and Ms. Pedraza have reportedly established a household based on clearly demarcated roles, whereby Mr. Silva is the breadwinner, working full-time as a machine operator, while Ms. Pedraza is in charge of their household and the children. Mr. Silva reported that he enjoys coming home from work and playing with Yesica, who demands his attention. "As soon as I get home, she does not leave my side until she goes to bed," he said. Ms. Pedraza corroborated that information, stating, "She is her father's shadow. I don't know why. She will ask for help with something and if I go, she says, 'I asked for my dad. I want daddy to help me.' I don't know why she's so attached to him." On Mr.

the evaluation and therefore is highly discouraged. "Providing forensic and therapeutic psychological services to the same individual or closely related individuals involves multiple relationships that may impair objectivity and/or cause exploitation or other harm ..." (American Psychological Association, 2013. Guideline 4.02.01: Therapeutic-Forensic Role Conflicts.)

Silva's days off, the family typically eats out or spends time at the park or at his brother's ranch, where Yesica enjoys feeding the animals.

Mr. Silva described the close bond he has with his young daughter. He stated, "She always comes to me for everything. I braid her hair, and we do a lot of stuff together." According to Mr. Silva, when Ms. Pedraza was four months pregnant, they were told their baby had down syndrome, and they were encouraged to terminate the pregnancy. "But we never gave up," Mr. Silva stated, adding, "This is my first daughter, and I would never give up on her." Both parents described their joy upon finding out that Yesica was a healthy baby and has thus far not had any physical or cognitive delays. "She's a very smart little girl," Mr. Silva stated, adding, "She's fearless, adventurous, and very intelligent. She's a very healthy kid."

When asked what would happen if he were forced to leave the United States, Mr. Silva stated, "I really don't know. I don't know where I'd go, because I have nothing in Mexico. I have some family, but I haven't lived there in 26 years and it's not safe for me to be there. According to Mr. Silva, he would struggle greatly to find gainful employment and continue to support his family in the United States. "He's the only one that works. He's our pillar, so I don't know how we'd make it," Ms. Pedraza said. She added that she would not be able to relocate to Mexico, not only because she has her five U.S. born children in California, but also because she is undergoing medical treatment for gastrointestinal problems and depression, and she would not be able to continue her treatment there. "And Mexico is too dangerous. One of my cousins was kidnapped recently, and I think they murdered him," she said. Mr. Silva reported that he last visited Mexico in 2002. He stated that he witnessed his family being victim of extortion by the drug cartels, and lamented that several of his uncles and his cousins have been murdered. "My dad was a victim, too. He had to pay like 80 thousand dollars in 2016 and then he died the following year of a heart attack. He actually told [my siblings and I] not to return to Mexico because it was so dangerous," he said. Mr. Silva has continued to reside in San Diego, California, and now hopes to be able to adjust his immigration status so he can remain lawfully in the country and continue to provide his young daughter with unwavering support.

Behavioral Observations:

Yesica and her parents arrived on time to their scheduled appointment. Mr. Silva and Ms. Pedraza provided background information regarding Yesica's early development. They were able to provide intact, sequential, and logical personal histories, speaking clearly and coherently. They appeared to be reliable historians, and their accounts of their personal experiences were believable. Both parents were thoroughly informed of the limits of confidentiality and the purpose of this evaluation.

Yesica was observed both interacting with her parents and when she was in the room with me. She was engaging and cooperative, and displayed a content emotional expression. Overall, sufficient information was obtained for diagnostic purposes, yielding valid clinical impressions of Yesica's current functioning.

Impressions and Findings:

I observed Yesica interacting with both of her parents—together and individually—and playing with toys when alone in a room with me. Yesica was visibly comfortable approaching both parents, but her preference for her father was noticeable. She asked to sit on his lap and became a little bit anxious when he had to step out to use the restroom. She was also watchful when Mr. Silva was interviewed separately. Whenever her parents told her to do something, she typically only responded to her father, and while drawing pictures, she showed it to him and described the drawing to him only, even though her mother appeared interested in it. However, I did not perceive Yesica to have any animosity towards her mother.

While in the room with me, Yesica was engaging and playful. She chose to play with toy animal figures, and as I was trying to get her to put the toys away, she was insistent on “keeping them together.” “They have to go together, like this,” she said, as she paired the animals and put them in the box. Yesica also drew several pictures² including one of her family. In the picture, she is seen standing in between her parents, who are equidistant from her. Some anxiety was noticeable in her penmanship. Nonetheless, no other behavioral, emotional, or cognitive concerns were noted.

Summary and Recommendations:

Yesica Silva was brought in for an evaluation to assess her current psychological functioning and how a potential separation from her father due to his immigration case might affect her. She underwent a thorough psychological assessment consisting of a face-to-face clinical interview with her parents, clinical observation of the child interacting with the parents, and clinical observations of the child alone with me. Overall, valid clinical impressions of her current functioning were obtained.

Results from this psychological evaluation depicted Yesica as a happy and well-adjusted child within a cohesive family unit. Nonetheless, Yesica’s attitude towards her father was noticeably different than her disposition towards her mother, who tended to take a background role in the family interactions. Knowing Ms. Pedraza’s psychiatric history, it is understandable why Yesica would not have developed such a strong bond with her. Mr. Silva stepped in to compensate for Ms. Pedraza’s lack of involvement, and a certain family dynamic was established whereby the father is the one who pays attention to Yesica while the mother provides more practical care. However, Ms. Pedraza’s devotion to her daughter is unquestionable, as is Yesica’s love for her mother.

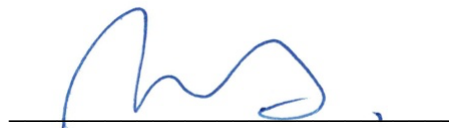
Mr. Silva and Ms. Pedraza described the potential hardships they would endure if Mr. Silva were not allowed to stay in the United States, the most concerning of which is a lengthy separation from his young daughter. Research in the subject of family separations revealed that children who are forcibly

² Figure drawings are projective diagnostic techniques in which an individual is instructed to draw a person, an object, or a situation so that cognitive, interpersonal, or psychological functioning can be assessed. Such tests are designed to reveal covert emotions and internal conflicts via the person's responses to ambiguous stimuli.

separated from their parents are prone to develop depression, troubled behaviors, and academic difficulties. Many factors can further complicate this transition, including family dynamics and the circumstances surrounding the separation³. In addition, Yesica is at an age when a separation from her father in particular would be detrimental for her. As a part of their normal developmental process, young girls often get physically and emotionally closer to their father. Although this is temporary, a forced separation at this stage could have long-lasting negative consequences.

Given her strong bond with her father and her emotional distress when he is out of her sight, Yesica would struggle tremendously in her father's absence, and the effects of a lengthy separation could have severe consequences for this young child. In fact, Yesica is already displaying some signs of separation anxiety, as evidenced in her interactions with her father and in her play. Continuing to live in the United States with both of her parents, together as a family, therefore appears to be the optimal setting to foster Yesica's healthy emotional and psychological wellbeing and to avoid potentially irreparable psychological damage.

If I can provide any additional information, or if you have questions regarding this report, feel free to contact me at your convenience. I declare under penalty of perjury that all statements contained in this document are true and correct to the best of my professional judgment.



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³ Suarez-Orozco, C., Todorova, I. and Louie, J. (2002). Making up for lost time: The experience of separation and reunification among immigrant families. *Family Process*, 4 (4).