

Dad, abducted son reunite

Boy, 6, allegedly taken by mom, settles in at home

Charles E. Ramirez / The Detroit News

EASTPOINTE -- Jeffrey Edwards feels like he's lived through a nightmare. And the worst part is, he says, is he doesn't know if it's over.

Four months ago, Edwards' 6-year-old son was taken from him by his ex-wife, Muingo Muthui, who did not have custody of the boy, according to police. Authorities captured the 29-year-old woman on Nov. 1 in North Carolina and reunited Edwards with his son, Pierce.

"It would be nice to be able to wake up and have the nightmare be over," said the 35-year-old single father from Eastpointe. "I don't think it'll ever happen. I'm worried if (Muthui) gets a second crack at this, he may never be found."

Edwards and local law enforcement officials are waiting to see if Muthui will be extradited to Macomb County to face child abduction charges.

Muthui is scheduled to appear in court on Nov. 20 in Guilford County, N.C., according to the District Attorney's Office. Officials said Thursday she remains in custody and is being held without bond.

Edwards, a school teacher, and Muthui have been at odds for years. They were married in 2004 but divorced within 14 months. A court initially awarded Muthui custody of the boy, but after a series of complaints from Edwards, a judge transferred custody to the child's father in 2006.

After that, Muthui frequently violated the court's custodial order by keeping the boy longer than her authorized visits allowed or keeping him away from his father altogether, Edwards said. He had to repeatedly petition a court to enforce his rights, he said.

Police say Muthui failed to return the boy to his father after a two-week visit at her home in Pennsylvania in August. Edwards said Muthui disappeared with his son.

Edwards then contacted police and Macomb County Prosecutor Eric Smith. Smith requested assistance from the FBI, and authorities found her in Greensboro, N.C. Police were responding to a domestic violence complaint at the home where she was staying with her son, her sister and her sister's children.

Diana Skaggs, a principal in the law firm of Diana L. Skaggs and Associates, said Edwards is fortunate he got his son back. Based in Louisville, Ky., Skaggs specializes in family law and the parental abduction of children.

She said the effects can be lasting.

"Kids react differently to it, but this is certainly something that impacts them," she said.

"Abductions uproot all of the stability and security that's so important to their development."

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