



BOBBY HADDOCK, Sheriff WASHINGTON COUNTY

**1293 JACKSON AVE., BUILDING 400 • P.O. BOX 626 • CHIPLEY, FLORIDA
32428**

PHONE (850) 638-6111 • FAX (850) 638-6184 • www.wcso.us

NEWS RELEASE

Two Charged in Disappearance of Missing Baby Shannon Dedrick

For Immediate Release

November 5, 2009

Washington County Sheriff Bobby Haddock today announces the arrest of Susan Baker, 50, and Crystina Lynn Mercer, 25, both of Chipley, in the disappearance of seven-month-old Shannon Dedrick. Baker, the child's babysitter and half-sister to the child's father, was charged with:

- Neglect of a child with aggravated circumstances – 2nd degree felony
- Interference with child custody – 3rd degree felony
- Filing a false report regarding a missing child – 1st degree misdemeanor
- Filing a false report of a crime – 1st degree misdemeanor
- Contributing to the delinquency of a child – 1st degree misdemeanor

Mercer, the child's mother, was charged with:

- Interference with child custody – 3rd degree felony
- Desertion of a child – 3rd degree felony
- Filing a false report regarding a missing child – 1st degree misdemeanor
- Filing a false report of a crime – 1st degree misdemeanor
- Contributing to the delinquency of a child – 1st degree misdemeanor

Investigators learned that on the night of Oct. 30 Baker and Mercer agreed to allow Baker to take permanent custody of the baby. The two arranged to meet at 1:30 a.m. on Oct. 31 at Mercer's residence for Mercer to give the child to Baker. Mercer later reported the child missing at 11:23 a.m.

Shannon Dedrick was safely located at 9:55 p.m. last night at Baker's residence located at 3395 Orange Hill Road in Chipley after Baker gave investigators consent to search the residence. The baby was found in a 2-foot by 3-foot wooden box under a bed in Baker's home.

The baby was taken to Northwest Florida Community Hospital where she was evaluated. The child is currently in the care of Florida Department of Children and Families.

Susan Baker's husband, James Baker, was detained last night but has since been released.

Baker and Mercer were booked into the Washington County Jail.

Sheriff Haddock thanks the following agencies for their assistance on the investigation: rescue personnel from Liberty, Gulf and Bay County Sheriff's Offices; K-9 teams from Klass Kids, Florida State Hospital, Gulf Correctional, and Southwest TANSAR; law enforcement personnel from Washington County Sheriff's Office, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, FBI, Team ADAM, an extension of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Office of the State Attorney, 14th Judicial Circuit, Bay, Calhoun, Jackson, Gulf, and Holmes County Sheriff's Offices, Chipley and Graceville Police Departments, Florida Department of Corrections, Bay County Mounted Posse and the Salvation Army.

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For Further Information Contact:

Heather Smith, Kristen Chernosky or Mike Morrison
FDLE Office of Public Information
(850) 410-7001

Andrea Gainey
Washington County Sheriff's Office
(850) 638-6115

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