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DAILY NEWS

Niece of Philadelphia woman who kept captives in basement sues city, social service workers

*Beatrice Weston, 20, one of five abused people rescued last year from a 'dungeon' in her aunt's basement,
is suing the city of Philadelphia for putting her in the custody of her aunt, a convicted criminal.*

The abused niece of a Philadelphia woman accused of keeping mentally challenged adults chained in a basement "dungeon" to steal their government checks sued the city, claiming it condemned her to a decade of torture by placing her in her aunt's custody.

Beatrice Weston, 20, was one of five people rescued in October from a makeshift house of horrors in the city's Tacony neighborhood.

Three disabled men and one woman were found locked in a cramped basement boiler room that reeked of urine and human feces, while Weston was locked in a closet upstairs.

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Weston's aunt, Linda Weston, and three others - her daughter Jean McIntosh, her boyfriend Gregory Thomas, and Eddie "The Reverend" Wright, a homeless street preacher - were charged with keeping the group captive and abusing them for a decade as part of a sick scheme to steal their Social Security checks.

Beatrice Weston was turned over to her aunt in 2002, when she was 10, after her mother told social service workers she couldn't care for the little girl, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported.

INSIDE SICKOS BASEMENT HELL

But Linda Weston was a convicted felon who served eight years in prison in the 1980s for starving her sister's boyfriend to death by locking him in a closet.

That conviction should have barred her from taking custody of a child, the suit said.

Weston's suit, filed Monday, also said she was starved, burned, beaten with a baseball bat, prostituted and forced to drink her own urine - all while the city ignored warnings that could have led to her rescue.

Beatrice Weston, 20, describes the ordeal she endured at the hands of her aunt, Linda Ann Weston, who allegedly terrorized and abused her for more than a decade.

"This would have been avoided if the city hadn't recommended that a convicted felon be given custody of a vulnerable, innocent child," Beatrice Weston's attorney Shanin Specter told CNN.

After the group was rescued in October, Police Commissioner Charles H. Ramsey told The Inquirer that he had never seen "a living victim" with injuries as horrific as Weston's.

Weston's suit charges the city and two Department of Human Services workers with reckless disregard for her safety and is asking for unspecified damages for physical and mental anguish, mental disturbances and a host of other traumas.

The department didn't comment on the suit.

Linda Weston and the two others are due in court in January to face charges of kidnapping, assault, conspiracy, false imprisonment and other counts.