

SUSPECT...

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"We were hostages because he owed money to the government," said Nubia Castellanos, a mother ordered onto the bus by Sang as she helped her autistic son get on.

During the hijacking, Sang carried a bag and told police he had a bomb. But the device turned out to be one of the children's respirators and police found no weapon.

The youngsters were on the way to their school, Blue Lakes Elementary, when Sang forced his way aboard at a stop near the church off the Palmetto Expressway southwest of downtown Miami. He pushed aside Ms. Castellanos and told bus driver Alicia Chapman in Spanish, "I'm taking control," police said.

Mrs. Chapman, Ms. Castellanos, a school aide and 13 children, who are in kindergarten through fourth grade, were on the bus when Sang seized it. The aide, Ms. Castellanos, her child and another student were let off during stops ordered by the hijacker before the bus reached Miami Beach.

A convoy of pursuing police cars, lights flashing, quickly formed around the bus as the vehicle, with the door wide open and the bus driver obeying the rules of the road, traveled at a cautious 35 mph to 40 mph, below the 55 mph limit.

"The bus driver said she felt threatened, because the subject, when he argued with her, would reach inside his jacket. She thought he might shoot her," said Pat Brickman, a Metro-Dade

police spokesman. "She kept the subject calm, she kept reasoning with him. She said 'I'll take you where you want to go.' I would give her a lot of credit not just for keeping the kids calm but for keeping this hijacker in a lucid state so that he didn't shoot anybody," he said.

The ordeal, broadcast live on national television, ended outside Joe's Stone Crab, a popular restaurant at the southern tip of Miami Beach. The bus came to a stop; one child jumped out and police fired one shot at Sang.

Police then swarmed the bus's front door, and more shots were fired. Sang was then dragged along the sidewalk and into an alley.

"Police opened the back door of the bus and motioned for the kids to come off," said a witness, Joe Belviso. "Police were grabbing the kids and carrying them away from the bus. One was crying, and the others had blank expressions on their faces."

At least one youngster was cut by flying glass from a window broken when police shot the hijacker, and needed stitches on his forehead, school officials said. But none of the students were seriously hurt.

"When they got the ice cream, they felt a lot better," Dade County schools Superintendent Octavio Visiedo said.

Schools spokesman Henry Fraind said Mrs. Chapman, the 46-year-old bus driver, is a "modern-day hero."

After being taken inside the restaurant, the children were put on a different bus to their school, where they and their parents hugged and wept.

LIVE-IN...

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mother after she was artificially inseminated with the sperm of an anonymous donor and Jake's biological father did not object to "Stephen T.K." becoming the boy's legal father, according to court papers.

"It's going to be very positive for Jake and it's really positive for children in general," said "Stephen T.K.," who asked that his identity not be revealed. "There's a lot of people that benefited from this."

Some Family and Surrogates' courts in the state have been allowing the filing of adoption petitions by unmarried partners, but many have not, according to the American Civil Liberties Union. Thursday's ruling will remove uncertainty in thousands of households, it said.

As Kaye noted in her decision, some provisions of state adoption laws date back more than 100 years to a time before unmarried households were common. In any adoption arrangement, Kaye

said, the welfare of the child must remain the most important consideration. She said unmarried couples can sometimes present far better households to children than single-parent ones.

"Stephen T.K.'s" attorney, Nicholas Priore of Utica, said that by allowing unmarried partners to adopt, the court can guarantee that the children receive a range of financial benefits that are now in question. "Child support, inheritance, health insurance, pension rights, Social Security benefits — those protections will all be there for the child," he said.

It was easy to see Thursday why it took the unusually long time of nearly five months for the court to make a ruling in the case. The judges had apparently been engaged in a philosophical tug of war between Kaye and Judge Joseph Bellacosa, who wrote a 24-page dissenting opinion, one page shorter than Kaye's majority ruling.

Bellacosa said the majority of the court went too far.

QUEBEC...

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stability if the separatists try another breakaway.

"The possibility that he would no longer be involved in the day-to-day sovereignty agenda is being viewed as a favorable thing," said Rob Palombi, a market analyst with MMS International.

Although Bouchard was unsure of his own future, he announced a firm decision by his Bloc Quebecois to reverse their long-term plan to quit Parliament. Instead, he said Bloc members would keep their seats, despite the referendum defeat, to fight proposals aimed at keeping Quebec in Canada.

"The objective of sovereignty is more alive than ever," he said. "More than ever, it's important to have Quebecers in Ottawa who defend the interests of Quebec

when unprecedented attacks will be launched against us."

The Bloc, with 53 seats, is Parliament's largest opposition party. A few Bloc members might resign, but special elections would be held to replace them, Bouchard said.

Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien has promised that Parliament, controlled by his Liberal Party, will act swiftly on political changes intended to satisfy Quebec nationalists.

Chretien said those changes would include formal recognition of Quebec as a "distinct society" and a commitment that the constitution would not be amended without Quebec's consent.

Bouchard said these proposals were a "decoy" and not worth discussing. Quebec will negotiate with Ottawa on only one basis, he said: "Equal to equal, the day after the next referendum."

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