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Cameron's father has decided to take over the process of obtaining legal representation. He located and hired attorney Christopher "Chris" Francis Morales to represent Cameron in the San Mateo County criminal matter.

Attorney background

The attorney is Christopher Francis Morales of The Morales Law Firm. The practice is identified publicly as The Morales Law Firm, rather than Morales & Associates, so the engagement agreement should be checked to confirm that it names Christopher F. Morales, California State Bar No. 153152.

Morales is currently an active California attorney. He was admitted to practice in June 1991 and is a State Bar-certified specialist in criminal law. The State Bar's public profile presently displays no disciplinary or administrative action. It also identifies Santa Clara University School of Law as his law school and says that Morales and members of his staff speak Spanish. California State Bar profile

A certified criminal-law specialist must meet requirements beyond ordinary bar membership, including substantial criminal-law experience, additional education, a written examination, references from attorneys and judges, and periodic recertification. California State Bar explanation

Morales has practiced criminal defense for more than 30 years. His firm handles misdemeanors, felonies, child-abuse allegations, assault and battery cases, drug charges, restraining orders, and related criminal matters. His firm states that he served on the San Mateo County Bar Association's Board of Directors from 2006 through 2009 and previously chaired the San Mateo Private Defender Panel. Attorney biography

His criminal-defense experience, San Mateo County background, and experience with cases involving allegations concerning children appear relevant to Cameron's current charge under California Penal Code section 273a(b) and the accompanying CR-160 criminal protective order. His qualifications do not predict an outcome, but he appears to be an appropriate type of attorney for the matter.

Contact information

The Morales Law Firm
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Email: chris@moralesdefense.com
Website: https://sfcriminallawspecialist.com

The firm's website lists both the Redwood City and San Francisco offices. Firm contact information

Information Morales will likely need immediately

Cameron should provide Morales with complete, accurate information, even if some of it is uncomfortable or appears unfavorable. Her attorney cannot evaluate the case effectively if he receives only part of the story.

Court and case documents

- The criminal complaint or other charging document
- Cameron's case number
- The courthouse, courtroom department, judge's name, and prosecutor's name, if known
- All arraignment paperwork and minute orders
- The complete CR-160 criminal protective order, including every page and checked box
- Cameron's release, bail, booking, citation, and notice-to-appear documents
- The date and purpose of the next hearing
- Any document concerning a requested modification of the protective order
- Any prior attorney's notes, correspondence, or filings
- The court transcript, if one exists
- If no transcript is available, the minute order and information about whether a court reporter or recording was present

Cameron's account of the incident

Cameron should prepare a private, chronological account for Morales covering:

- What happened before, during, and after the incident
- Everyone who was present
- What Cameron said to police, family members, medical personnel, school personnel, or anyone else
- Whether Cameron was interviewed, detained, arrested, searched, or advised of her rights
- Whether alcohol, cannabis, medication, or another substance was involved
- Any injuries, medical treatment, photographs, or examinations
- The names and contact information of possible witnesses

- Anything a witness might say that contradicts Cameron's account
- Any prior disagreements, incidents, police calls, or allegations involving the same people

This account should be sent privately to Morales, not circulated among family members.

Evidence and communications

Morales should be told about all potentially relevant evidence, including:

- Text messages, emails, social-media messages, and voicemail
- Photographs and videos
- Call logs and location information
- Doorbell, security-camera, or vehicle-camera footage
- Medical, school, or childcare records
- Police reports or incident numbers already in Cameron's possession
- 911 calls or body-camera footage that may exist
- Names and contact information for favorable and unfavorable witnesses

Nothing should be deleted, edited, cropped, rewritten, or posted publicly. Morales can determine what should be preserved and what discovery he needs to obtain from the prosecution.

Protective order, custody, and visitation information

Morales needs to see the exact wording of the CR-160 order. He should also receive:

- The name of every protected person
- The order's effective and expiration dates
- Every contact, stay-away, or residence restriction
- The child's current placement and caregiver
- Existing custody and visitation orders
- Any family-court case number
- Any CPS contact, report, safety plan, or investigation, even though the present charge is criminal
- Cameron's requested visitation arrangement
- Any proposal for supervised visitation
- Information about whether Cameron has had any direct or indirect contact since the order was issued

Cameron and the family should follow the existing protective order exactly unless the court modifies it in writing. Permission from a family member or even from a protected person does not itself change the court order.

Cameron's complete background

Morales will likely need:

- Cameron's complete legal name, date of birth, address, and contact information
- All prior names or aliases
- Every previous arrest, charge, conviction, dismissal, restraining order, or probation matter she knows about
- Any current probation, diversion, treatment, or court obligations
- Relevant medical, mental-health, substance-use, or prescription information
- Current employment, housing, treatment, and parenting circumstances
- Information about counseling, rehabilitation, classes, or other constructive steps already underway

Sensitive medical, mental-health, and substance-use information should be disclosed privately to Morales. He can decide what is legally relevant and whether any part of it should be documented or presented.

Unverified background-report information

Morales should receive a copy of the TrustFinder report that displayed several possible records under Cameron's name, apparently associated with August 7, 2021:

- Possession of a controlled substance, misdemeanor
- Battery on a person, misdemeanor
- Obstructing or resisting a public officer, misdemeanor
- False imprisonment involving violence, fraud, or deceit, felony
- Possession of controlled-substance paraphernalia, misdemeanor

The report must be clearly labeled unverified. It may contain incorrect dates, identify a different person, or list arrests or charges that did not result in convictions. It should not be presented as Cameron's confirmed criminal history. Morales can obtain or review official court records and determine whether any of these entries actually belong to Cameron and whether they could affect the current matter.

Questions to ask Morales

The family should obtain clear answers to the following:

- What are the exact charges currently filed?
- Does the complaint allege any enhancements or additional counts?
- What is the next court date, and what will happen at that hearing?
- Has Morales formally appeared as Cameron's attorney?
- Has he requested the prosecution's discovery?
- Will he seek to modify the CR-160 order so Cameron can have visitation?
- Is supervised visitation a realistic interim request?
- What facts or documents would help support a modification?
- Does Cameron need separate family-law or dependency counsel?

- Does the fee cover arraignment, pretrial appearances, motions, negotiation, protective-order modification, and trial?
- Who is the primary office contact, and how quickly must Cameron respond to requests?
- Should one family member coordinate documents, or should all communication come directly from Cameron?

Important points for the family

Although Cameron's father found and paid for the attorney, Cameron is ordinarily the client. The attorney's duties of loyalty and confidentiality are owed to her. Her father's financial involvement does not give him control over legal strategy or automatic access to confidential communications.

Cameron must complete the smallest actions only she can perform, with someone beside her.She needs to communicate directly and honestly with Morales, provide the requested materials, attend appointments and court hearings, and follow his instructions. Hiring an attorney does not eliminate the need for her engagement.

Family members should avoid questioning witnesses, contacting protected people on Cameron's behalf, posting about the case, or trying to independently negotiate visitation. They should also ask Morales before joining privileged conversations or being copied on sensitive emails, because including third parties can create confidentiality issues.

The most useful role for the family is to organize the records, maintain a calendar of deadlines and hearings, preserve evidence, and help Cameron respond promptly while allowing Morales to direct the legal strategy.