

Officials in the Los Angeles suburb of Arcadia have taken custody of a 13-year-old girl and they say was kept in such isolation by her parents that she never even learned to talk. The girl still wore diapers and was uttering infantile noises when a social worker discovered the case two weeks ago. Could she ever learn? Jeannie's case was so scientifically important that the government funded a team of scientists to help answer the many questions she posed. Two of the scientists who would become especially important to Jeannie were child psychologist James Kent and linguist Susan Curtis. And all the time the child was in the bedroom. The entire furnishing to the bedroom consisted of a cage with a pull-down chicken wire lid and some type of piece of wire securing it when they closed it down. There was a potty chair with some kind of homemade strapping device. But the authorities are hoping she still may have a normal learning capacity. Among the first to see the child was Temple City Detective Sergeant Frank Lindley. And I took one look at her and she wasn't much bigger than my daughter Beverly who had just turned seven about three months earlier. And I really had a hard time conceiving of the idea that the child was the age that she was. As the experts looked on, they realized that she might be the answer to the question that had troubled science for so long. So we seized this woman, this wonderful opportunity that she provided us in as loving a way as we could, but using it to finally get our chance to address head-on specific hypotheses and notions about human language and the human mind. And the earlier this neglect begins and the longer it carries on, the worse the damage will be. Starved of stimulation, Jeannie's brain had simply not developed the capacity for language. Unable to face the truth, Clark took matters into his own hands. This morning, the authorities reported that 70-year-old Clark Wiley shot and killed himself just before he was to go to court and be arraigned for child abuse. After 13 years, Jeannie was at last free. In other respects, it was because she was cognitively deficient in this island of human mind, the mental faculty that we call grammar. In Jeannie's brain, the left part of her brain, her cortex, that has those neural systems responsible for speech and language, because she never heard any words and because she was never spoken to very often, they didn't get stimulated. And so I spent lots and lots of time on the phone pleading with people to intervene and save this person who had had the worst experience of deprivation and isolation in all recorded medical history. As Jeannie's condition deteriorated, Irene decided that Susan Curtis and the other academics had become too close to Jeannie. The child obviously had been severely mistreated. She was still in diapers, couldn't walk. For 13 years, Jeannie had spent her nights locked in bed, her days strapped to a potty chair. During that time, Clark had ordered his son John and wife Irene never to talk to her. Oh, God. Neither had ever encountered a case as extreme as Jeannie's. We looked at her as a newborn, in a way, even though we know she came with 13 years of memories and experiences. And because they weren't stimulated, they got smaller and less functional and disconnected. In her darkened room, she had led a life of near total isolation. Even close neighbors were completely unaware of her presence. While Clark was out buying groceries, she seized her chance and fled. It was the first glimpse the world would have of Clark and Irene's dark secret. I met Clark and Irene at Temple City Sheriff's Station. And for scientists, she was just the case they had been waiting for. For 13 years, Jeannie had lived a life of complete isolation. Raised in a city bedroom, Jeannie was as much a feral child as if she had been brought up by wolves. At 13, she was the size of a six-year-old. As this footage shows, Jeannie was blossoming. She was still haunted by

her traumatic upbringing, trapped by the memories of the awful fate she had suffered. So it wasn't because she was cognitively deficient. But today, we have a much clearer picture of what actually happens in cases of extreme neglect like Jeannie's. On her 18th birthday, Jeannie moved back with her mother, Irene, into the house in which she had been so terribly abused. But after only a few weeks, it was clear that Irene couldn't cope. A lawsuit followed. I went from being asked to be her guardian to one week later being prevented from seeing her or phoning her. Mr. Wiley