

# Harriet <sup>COPY</sup> Berne leaves hospital <sup>8</sup>

## Ready to fight for sons

By GARY GEREW  
D&C Staff Writer

Harriet Berne, the former Rochester woman who took an overdose of pills after her two sons were returned to her ex-husband, Dale, last week, was released from a Houston hospital Monday.

"That day I was told I'd probably never see my children again and spend four years in a federal prison," Mrs. Berne said yesterday as she explained why she took an overdose of tranquilizers. "I felt as bad as possible. I was isolated here in Texas, but now I've gotten lots of support and I'm ready to fight."

Mrs. Berne, 37, said in a telephone interview she wouldn't want to return to Rochester to stay, but she may be extradited to face charges of first-degree custodial interference involving the taking of her two sons, Mark and Scott, in 1979.

Berne, who was given custody of the boys after the couple divorced, is also suing his ex-wife for \$1 million because she took the boys. Berne is principal of Eastridge High School in Irondequoit.

"I've been with a lawyer all this morning," Mrs. Berne said yesterday, "but I still don't know what will be happening."

Mrs. Berne was rushed unconscious to a Houston hospital after taking the overdose a few hours after a Texas judge upheld a New York court order giving the boys to Berne.

Berne and his sons returned to Rochester.

Mrs. Berne had been living with her sons for two years in Houston while teaching school under the name of Judy King. The ruse came to an end when a babysitter saw pictures of the boys in a magazine in a story on parental kidnapping. The babysitter then told officials about Harriet Berne.

Mrs. Berne signed "Judy" to the suicide note she left behind in a bank book for her parents and fiance. "I think of myself as Judy," Mrs. Berne said. "Harriet Berne is a part of my life that I want to give up. It's the new life here that I enjoy."

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