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Woman accused of leaving kids in car to go to casino

Posted on Tuesday, July 1 at 10:26am | By Henry K. Lee

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A San Jose woman has been arrested for allegedly leaving her two children in her car late into the night while she visited the Graton Casino in Rohnert Park, authorities said Tuesday.

Maria Yadira Mondragon-Barboza, 37, was booked at Sonoma County Jail on suspicion of misdemeanor child endangerment. She made bail and is to appear in Superior Court on July 22.

The investigation began about 11:40 p.m. Monday when a Sonoma County sheriff's deputy patrolling the upper level of the casino's parking structure saw a 10-year-old girl sitting in the back seat of a Honda, said sheriff's Sgt. Cecile Focha.

The girl told the deputy that "her mother had gone into the casino and left her to care for her little brother," who is 1 year old, Focha said.

The deputy discovered that the car had its keys in the ignition in the "on" position, authorities said.

"The children could have easily left the car and walked into traffic, fallen from the ledge or become victims of any number of crimes," Focha said.

The deputy stayed with the children after asking casino security officers to find their mother. About 20 minutes later, security arrived with Mondragon-Barboza, who told the deputy that she was "only going into the casino for a few minutes" and didn't want to bring the children inside with her because her 1-year-old was sleeping, authorities said.

"She later acknowledged that it was dangerous to leave the children alone," Focha said.

The children, who were unharmed, were picked up by their aunt, Focha said.

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She might have been redeeming her free slot play.

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@coasterfan - not might have,was.....

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Get help, lady.

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"She later acknowledged is was dangerous." Duh!

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Oh please, it was only a casino. She probably takes them inside when she visits her crack dealer.

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Addictions can lead to all sorts of crappy behavior. Gambling is an addiction for some people.

I absolutely cannot accept leaving young children alone, in a car, or ANYWHERE.

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@CaptMuldoon - if it was Safeway, would she have a "food addiction"?

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When I was a kid my parents sent us to the arcade with a \$20 while they gambled. With instructions to come and find them if we ran out of money. My sister and I had a blast.

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@jaded

These Indian casinos aren't like Vegas or even Reno. They're not really equipped for kids, although kids are allowed at the restaurants. I remember being 12 and wandering around the MGM Grand Reno complex. I think I went bowling and bought some sugar free candy (they call it a "mild laxative effect") that made me sick when I had too much.

Red Hawk near Placerville does have a place where you can check in kids at a play area. It's something like \$8/hour.

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"She later acknowledged that she was an idiot parent to have left her children alone"

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Well, all those discounted buffet tickets they are sending out will do it every time.

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@raffy

Graton doesn't have a buffet. It's something they purposely decided they wouldn't have so they could feature specific restaurants.

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Wait. Wasn't this to visit a tanning salon?

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Maria situation raising questions. Will she win in the casino? Did she place a bet on the kids being there after returning to the car? Wonders never cease.

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