

Slain Spring girl's siblings awarded to grandparents

Neighbor testified mother blamed falls for girl's death

By TERRI LANGFORD and PEGGY O'HARE Copyright 2009 Houston Chronicle

July 30, 2009, 10:42AM



Emma is shown in a picture on mother Abigail Young's Facebook page.

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The paternal grandparents of a 4-year-old Spring girl who died last month after being beaten and sexually assaulted have received temporary custody of her two sisters.

State District Judge Judy Warne directed Children's Protective Services to retrieve the girls, ages 6 and 11, and deliver them to the paternal grandparents. The father of the slain girl, Emma Thompson, and the surviving 6-year-old also lives there. The 11-year-old has a different father.

The girls' mother, 33-year-old Abigail Elizabeth Young, is restricted to two one-hour visits per month at CPS offices during the temporary custody period, Warne said.

Two of Young's former husbands are seeking custody of the surviving siblings, who currently live with Young's grandmother in Brenham.

On Wednesday, a distraught neighbor testified that Young repeatedly blamed Emma's death on two separate falls — and that she tried to save her daughter's life by using super glue to close the wound on her head.

“She told me ... that Emma had fallen in the morning on a table while trying to get a kolache ... and that afternoon in the bathroom,” said Christine Frazier, who lived next door.

Frazier told the court her conversation with Young, a registered nurse, took place hours after the child died after being rushed to Memorial Hermann-The Woodlands Hospital on June 27.

Frazier also noticed blood on Emma's flowered underpants the day before she died. When Frazier confronted Young about the blood, Young said it came from a scratch.

“She said she (Emma) scratched her vagina when she got out of the pool,” Frazier said.

Texas Child Protective Services first began investigating a complaint about Emma's care earlier in June. The investigation found the girl tested positive for genital herpes, but she was not removed. The details of the young girl's death have offered a harrowing portrait of missed chances to save her.

Frazier's testimony also detailed the frantic moments before and after Emma's death and how no one, not Frazier or even the little girl's grandmother, has gotten a complete explanation about how Emma died.

Margie Young, Emma's grandmother, told incredulous attorneys that she had not pressed her daughter for details surrounding the little girl's death.

“My daughter was unclear about what happened to Emma,” Margie Young said. “She didn't know.”

Frazier cried as she described her futile attempts to get answers from Young, her estranged friend and next-door neighbor, just hours after the girl was declared dead.

Throughout the dazed conversation, snippets of what sent Emma to the hospital began to emerge, Young's neighbor of six years said. Young mentioned Emma's two falls earlier that day; she told of bite marks on Emma's stomach, which Young claimed had been made by the young daughter of her 27-year-old boyfriend, Lucas Coe.

“She's kinky like her father,” Frazier recalled Young telling her.

'Don't lie to me'

Young also told Frazier how she “super glued” Emma's skull fracture before she took the little girl to the hospital. “She said it was not abnormal (to use glue to prevent infection),” Frazier said.

When she pressed Young for more details about Coe, Young told her, “He would never hurt me or my children.”

Finally, Frazier said, she grabbed Young, began shaking her and demanded, “Don't lie to me.”

Police suspect Coe and Young know more about the girl's death, but neither has been charged. Harris County investigators are waiting for results of the girl's autopsy.

Attempts by The Chronicle to reach Coe were unsuccessful. A phone number listed for him is out of order.

Margie Young said she did not ask her daughter whether Coe killed Emma, nor did she ask her daughter about her role: "No sir, I wouldn't have to ask her that."

Frazier said Coe came to her house in a panic the night of Emma's death.

He asked Frazier if she would keep Emma's two sisters and his own child, overnight because Young had taken Emma to the hospital.

"I can't be here, Christie," Coe allegedly told Frazier, explaining that he had recently been ordered by CPS to stay away from his own child. Records show and officials confirm that Coe has been indicted for injury to another child and as a precaution, custody of his child had been transferred to his own parents.

Coe then pointed down the street to what appeared to be an ambulance, which had been called by Young as she was driving Emma to the hospital.

"It's not a wreck," Frazier said Coe told her. "It's Abbey and Emma."

No explanation was offered during the hearing as to why Emma's mother did not call 911 from the family's home, instead of down the street from her car.

[*terri.langford@chron.com*](mailto:terri.langford@chron.com)

[*peggy.ohare@chron.com*](mailto:peggy.ohare@chron.com)