

Two Austin women plead not guilty to child abuse

Heather Rule
hrule@postbulletin.com

Two Austin women accused of making a child hold jugs of milk for hours and beating the child with a wooden stick or belt pleaded not guilty Thursday in Mower County District Court.

Shavon Melisa Blake, 28, pleaded not guilty to malicious punishment of a child-less than substantial bodily harm, a gross misdemeanor; and misdemeanor domestic assault-intentionally inflicts/attempt to inflict bodily harm. Jacqueline Glenda Richardson, 48, pleaded not guilty to two counts of gross misdemeanor malicious punishment of a child-less than substantial bodily harm.

Their next court appearance is set for Jan. 18.

According to the criminal complaint, Austin Police spoke with an Austin Public Schools teacher Sept. 5 regarding suspected child abuse of a student. The teacher said two other parents had reported Sept. 4 that the child was allegedly being abused at home. The child had told the teacher that Blake had reportedly punched the child in the face and hit the child in the back many times before. The child also reported having to hold or carry a milk jug around the house from 2 p.m. until 11 p.m. or 1 a.m., the report says, and sometimes it's filled with "rotten milk" or pop can tabs. Blake, Richardson and Richardson's boyfriend have also allegedly struck the child on the legs with a stick and a belt, according to the victim.

The child had also been reportedly struck with spoons, the child told police. Sometimes the child was forced to "kneel on the floor and hold two milks up in the air," according to child. This has been happening for about two years, and the child has had to hold the jugs "90 something" times, the child said in the report. If the child puts the jugs down, the child is hit with a belt or wooden stick, the report says.

A relative of the victim, also a child, reported being "on the bottle" from about 2 p.m. until 8 p.m. and sometimes longer, the complaint says. The other alleged victim also said this has allegedly been happening for about two years.

Police went to Blake's home Sept. 7 and arrested her. When asked about the jugs, Blake said the two kids get punished that way when they are at Richardson's home, according to the report. The injuries on the legs were "bug bites," Blake said, adding that one of the kids "falls a lot," the report says. As officers were leaving, Richardson arrived and was also arrested. Both Blake and Richardson said the victim allegedly only held the jugs for 30 minutes at a time.

"We don't want to beat them, so we put the bottles in their hands," Richardson said.

The bottles containing pop can tabs were taken by police as evidence.

The gross misdemeanor charges for the women are each punishable by up to one year in prison, a \$3,000 fine or both. The domestic assault charge for Blake is punishable by up to 90 days in prison, a \$1,000 fine or both.