

Female child abuser out on \$40K bond

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
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5-year-old girl kicked in the butt, 8-year-old boy fed bologna sandwiches

A Gallup female, charged with two counts of child abuse, has been released from the Gallup-McKinley County Adult Detention Center on a \$40,000 bond amount, officials confirmed.

Shannon Begay, 32, was jailed on April 3 and let out April 5, according to jail records. According to an arrest warrant, Gallup police began investigating Begay after one of her kids, a 5-year-old, identified in the arrest warrant as A.B., came into the Gallup Indian Medical Center at least once looking malnourished and with body bruises.

The same physical situation appeared to be happening to an 8-year-old boy, identified in the warrant as A.B.'s brother. Shannon and Harold Begay were the legal guardians of the kids, according to statements in the arrest warrant. The kids were turned over to the Begay's after the state Department of Children, Youth and Families placed them.

The warrant states that the two kids were denied visits by family members, as per the wishes of Harold Begay, the warrant states. Harriet Dawes, a relative of the kids, was told by Harold Begay that A.B. was suspended from school because she continuously urinated on herself. Dawes states in the arrest warrant that A.B. appeared to have lost a lot of weight.

Tasheena Wilson, a detective with the Gallup Police Department, notes in the arrest warrant that the first time she saw A.B. the girl had red marks around her left eye and nose.

"She had scars on her neck and jaw," Wilson states in the arrest warrant. "Her left eye lid was

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lower than her right.” There were scars on A.B.’s legs, arms and stomach area, Wilson notes. Also, it looked as though A.B. hadn’t bathed in months, Wilson recorded.

Shannon and Harold Begay told police that A.B.’s injuries were self-inflicted. The police ultimately confiscated Harold Begay’s cell phone to search for photographic evidence. A.B. and J.W. were interviewed by a child forensics specialist who said A.B. admitted to being hit and kicked in the butt by Shannon Begay. The child said Shannon Begay screams and hits her with a shoe and hit her in her left eye with her fist at least once.

J.W. backed up A.B.’s testimony to the forensic specialist. He said Shannon Begay pushed his sister so hard one time that it created a hole in a door. The boy said that he and his sister were fed “bologna sandwiches and cold food,” saying he and A.B. were told to sleep on the floor by Shannon Begay. J.W. said he did not feel safe with the Begay’s, but said he did feel safe with the Dawes family.

Shannon Begay did say to Wilson that the body scars on A.B. came from fingers being pressed into A.B. Shannon Begay said A.B. injured her eye as a result of being pushed into a door knob. When Wilson asked why Shannon Begay apparently didn’t like A.B, Shannon Begay responded that she didn’t like A.B.’s mother. Shannon Begay told Wilson that she beat up A.B. about every three or four days.

There was no attorney listed in jail records for Shannon Begay. Jail records show that Harold Begay was arrested in February, but not for the child abuse case.

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