

Couple arrested for abusing a baby

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A woman called the police after she realized a relative and his girlfriend were allegedly abusing a baby.

On May 12, around 11:38 pm, Gallup Police Officer Matthew Strandy arrived at the Gallup Indian Medical Center, 516 E. Nizhoni Blvd., because the hospital staff had called in a child abuse report regarding an 18-month-old baby boy.

When he got to the hospital, Strandy met with a woman who said Eric Begay and his girlfriend Jessica Haley had abused the infant.

The woman explained that when she got home around 9 pm that night, she heard a loud thud in the children's room, and she heard the baby begin to cry.

When she went into the bedroom she met the two older children, 12 and 13 years old, respectively. According to Strandy's report, the two older children told the woman that Begay, 37, had been slapping and hitting the baby.

The woman said that Haley, 32, was also reportedly in the room when Begay was abusing the

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baby.

According to the criminal complaint, the woman stated that when she went into the bedroom the baby was unresponsive and “out of it.”

Strandy asked the hospital staff if they believed the baby had internal injuries, and a nurse said the baby likely suffered a concussion. The hospital staff said they would be performing a CAT scan and X-rays on the baby.

When Strandy looked the baby over, the boy had severe bruising and swelling along his hairline, forehead, above his eyebrows, and above his eyes. There were also small cuts in his hairline above his right eye and on his face.

The woman confirmed that Begay and Haley were still at her house, on the 400 block of Zane Drive.

When officers arrived at the house Haley told them that Begay had left, and he was wearing all black attire. But when they entered the house, the officers found Begay hiding behind some curtains.

Begay and Haley were transported to the Gallup Police Department. Haley had a warrant out for her arrest, and when they searched her, officers found a blue pill and meth on her. Haley allegedly had the meth on her when she was in the house with the children.

Haley also told the officers that she saw Begay hitting the infant because he had been crying.

Haley was charged with child abuse, obstruction of an investigation of child abuse, harboring or aiding a felon, and possession of a controlled substance. Her preliminary hearing is scheduled for May 25.

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