

WLTX: Grandmother, Aunts Testify In Child Death Trial 5/21/14

Clark Fouraker, WLTX 7:50 p.m. EDT May 21, 2014

Columbia, SC (WLTX) – During the second day of the trial against the parents of Robert Guinyard Jr., members of the jury cried when solicitors showed photos of the dead child and scars from alleged abuse.

Robert's grandmother, and two of Robert's aunts, testified Wednesday they contacted the South Carolina Department of Social Services about the boys well being.

The family members say they witnessed abuse by Robert's mother, Courtney Thompson, and father, Robert Antonio Guinyard. The parents are both charged with Homicide by Child Abuse and Unlawful Conduct Toward a Child.

Judge Robert Hood sent the jury out of the courtroom after Robert's grandmother entered the courtroom in tears. She struggled to testify about instances where she says she saw her daughter abuse the little boy.

"He was barely allowed food and it wasn't hard to tell," said Natalie Thompson, Robert's aunt.

Natalie Thompson interviewed with News19 earlier this year about the abuse she says happened to her nephew.

The physicians contacted DSS in one case after being shown photos of alleged abuse, and in another case after concerns about Robert not showing up to recommended appointments.

"I had concerns the parents had very little knowledge," said Dr. Monica McCutcheon.

Photos of Robert's body at the crime scene were shown to the jury after objections from defense attorneys for Thompson and Guinyard Sr.

Defense attorneys continue to employ a strategy that pits the two parents against one another.

While their questioning of witnesses called by the state has been limited, attorneys for the parents continue to hone in on testimony that evaluates the character and parenting of the parent they don't represent.

The trial will continue Thursday with the 18th witness called by the state.

<http://www.wltx.com/story/news/local/2014/05/21/grandmother-aunts-testify-robert-guinyard-junior-trial/9392491/>