



Everything Michigan

Dominick Calhoun, boy who died after beating in Argentine Township, wet his pants morning abuse began

By Laura Angus | Flint Journal

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Ryan Garza/The Flint Journal

Genesee County Sheriff Robert Pickell talks about the case of Brandon Joshua-Frederick Hayes, who has been charged with torture and premeditated murder in the beating death of 4-year-old Dominick Calhoun, during a press conference on Thursday at the Genesee County Courthouse in Flint.

ARGENTINE TOWNSHIP, Michigan — Dominick Calhoun was sitting on the couch eating his breakfast that Thursday morning when he had an accident, wetting his pants and the sofa cushions where he sat.

That's when the beatings started, police said.

Day after day, the 4-year-old's listless body was dragged from his bed and beaten some more.

The little boy who was known for his bright blue eyes was found unconscious Sunday in the Argentine Township apartment he shared with his brother, mother and her boyfriend and that police now are calling a "drug house."

Dominick died Monday after he was removed from life support.

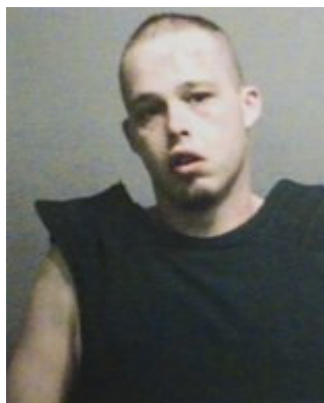
"This case goes beyond torture," said Genesee County Sheriff Robert Pickell.

The mother's boyfriend **Brandon J.F. Hayes**, 24, was



Submitted photo

Dominick Calhoun, 4, died Monday after police found him severely beaten on Sunday in his Argentine Township home.



Brandon Joshua-Frederick Hayes

charged Thursday with eight felony charges including torture, first-degree child abuse and first-degree premeditated murder, said Genesee County Prosecutor David Leyton.

Hayes asked who was going to pay for the soiled couch as he kicked and hit Dominick for three days, Pickell said.

"He was trying to give a sense of discipline for little Dominick," said Pickell.

The family moved in with Hayes on March 30, but after nine days living together Hayes said he was tired of raising Dominick, said Pickell.

Pickell said the investigation by the sheriff's department and Argentine Township police is ongoing, "especially as it relates to the mother," though he said he does not believe she participated in the abuse.

The boy's mother was also beaten, and Pickell said Hayes hit her and pulled out chunks of her hair when she tried to protect Dominick.

Police confirmed there was a history of the boy being taken into Child Protective Services while he was with his mother, though they declined to comment further.

The mother was **taken into custody** initially after the boy was found, but was **later released**.

Pickell called the apartment where Dominick lived with his brother, mother and her boyfriend was a "drug house." The boyfriend is accused of selling marijuana to a minor and possessing vicodin.

Hayes called Dominick "nothing more than a little crack head (baby) and he deserved to die," Pickell said.

Family said they didn't notice signs of abuse before Dominick's death, and Argentine Township police Chief Dan Allen said it's impossible to tell if he was previously injured.

Investigators claim that Hayes began beating the boy about the head, kicking him in the genitals and poking him in the eyes with his thumbs and fingers starting on April 8, after the accident on the couch, said Pickell.

The boy's hands were also burned, but police haven't determined how.

The abuse continued on Friday and Saturday, said Pickell.

The boy's aunts visited the apartment on Sunday and saw the bruises on their sister. They alerted the boy's paternal grandfather who returned to the apartment and found Dominick unconscious on his back in a bedroom.

The boy was wearing a T-shirt and training pants, said Pickell. His breath was shallow and he was moaning.



Submitted photo

Dominick Calhoun, 4, loved his red car, his family said. The boy was interested in cards, snowmobiling and dancing.



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Eric Calhoun 28, talks about his 4 year-old son Dominick, who was severely beaten in

Doctors at Hurley Medical Center removed a portion of his skull to alleviate pressure as his brain swelled. He was removed from life support Monday morning, after being declared brain dead.

"Little Dominick met his boogie man, and that was defendant Hayes," Genesee County Sheriff Robert Pickell.

Hayes is being held without bond for four of the charges and on a \$5 million bond for the rest. There is no attorney on file for him, according to court records.

Hayes was released from prison in July after serving nearly two years for assaulting/resisting/obstructing a police officer and third-degree fleeing a police officer, according to Michigan Department of Corrections records.

his home on Sunday in Argentine Township.

He was convicted of three counts of domestic assault and battery in 2004 and also has several prior drug convictions , according to court records.

Leyton said he another other members of law enforcement are "shaken" by what they've seen during this investigation.

"This was simply a vicious killing, as vicious as you can possibly imagine," Leyton said.

Dominick's **paternal grandfather, Rick Calhoun**, 50, of Linden said he hopes the criminal consequences faced by his grandson's accused killer will deter future child abuse.

"There's a guy out there who's going to try the same thing, but he's going to see this and he's going to see what happened to this guy, and he's going to stop," said Calhoun.

Calhoun said he'll be happy to have justice for Dominick, but helping other children is a main priority for his family.

"It's going to change a lot of people's perspective on what they're doing to their children," he said.

Officials also called on neighbors to come forward if they witnessed the beatings. No one alerted police, and Argentine Township police Chief Dan Allen said a phone call could have saved Dominick's life.

"A normal person would call law enforcement," he said. "That could have made the difference."

A preliminary hearing for Hayes is set for 9 a.m. April 27.

Editor's note: This post was updated.



Ryan Garza/The Flint Journal

Rick Calhoun, 50, of Linden, talks about his 4 year-old grandson Dominick Calhoun, who was found severely beaten in his Argentine Township apartment on Sunday afternoon. Dominick died Monday after he was removed from life support.