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Mom took meds for bipolar disorder

COURTS: Experts to determine if Dyer woman was insane when sons were killed

BY RUTHANN ROBINSON
rrobinson@nwitimes.com
219.662.5331

This story ran on nwitimes.com on Thursday, October 27, 2005 12:55 AM CDT

CROWN POINT | Two psychologists who interviewed a Dyer woman accused of killing her young sons testified Wednesday that they found her competent to stand trial.

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Magdalena Lopez, 30, pleaded not guilty to killing her two children, Erik, 2, and Anthony, 9, on July 19. Lopez told psychologists Jill Ann Miller and Douglas Caruana that she suffered from and was being medicated for bipolar disorder.

But they were only evaluating her for competence to stand trial -- specifically, if she understood the charges against her and could assist her attorney with her defense. Both testified they thought she did.

Public Defense Attorney Casey McCloskey asked Lake Criminal Court Judge Diane Ross Boswell to appoint a psychiatrist to evaluate Lopez, which she did.

McCloskey said three more mental health experts will have to examine Lopez to determine if she was insane at the time of the killings.

Police records from the night officers found the two boys bludgeoned to death show they took into evidence two medications used to treat depression and psychosis: Prozac and Zyprexa.

The Lopez family lived in Schererville prior to moving to Dyer. Records released by the department about its involvement with the Lopez family show one call about a family fight in September 1999 in an apartment on Matterhorn Lane.

Officers reported the couple "are going through a divorce (there is no paperwork yet), and both wanted custody of their 4-year-old son, Tony. Robert (Lopez) wanted Tony to go with him to his mother's; Magdalena wanted Tony to stay with her in the apartment. They agreed to let Tony go with Robert."

Dyer records show that on March 16, Child Protective Services faxed police a report of an investigation into alleged child abuse. Someone said Anthony had been choked by his mother.

"The report indicates that CPS does not believe the child is in imminent danger of bodily harm," the narrative section of the report states.

The document also states the detective spoke to the caseworker who said she interviewed the Lopez family and Magdalena Lopez's doctor.

"Mrs. Lopez suffers from bipolar disorder and may have accidentally injured her son when playing rough with him," the narrative states. "Mrs. Lopez will continue psychiatric counseling, and no further police action was necessary in this case."

On April 9, Robert Lopez called police. He told officers who arrived at 1029 Cambridge Lane in Dyer that his wife was bipolar and "is on one of her highs."

He said she threatened suicide a few days before, and he wanted to admit her to the hospital. During the call, officers spoke with Magdalena Lopez, and she said she didn't want to hurt herself but was upset about "her current situation with her husband."

The next time police were called to the house was July 19 by Magdalena Lopez, who told them she hurt her children. When they arrived, she was walking out the front door toward them with blood stains on her pants and shirt.

Police found the two boys dead inside the house. There was blood in the family room, kitchen, front hallway and garage, the report states.

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