

Beat: News

Police: 3 girls held captive at Arizona home for 2 years

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USPA News - Three young girls described as filthy and malnourished were rescued from an Arizona home on Tuesday after they had been held captive by their parents for up to two years, police said, but few details about the circumstances were immediately released. The investigation began at 4:02 a.m. local time on Tuesday when patrol officers responded to a 911 call that reported a domestic fight involving a knife at a residence in Tucson, a city about 60 miles (98 kilometers) north of the U.S.-Mexico border.

The call was made by a neighbor. "Upon arrival they discovered two juvenile females that were extremely filthy, approximate ages 12 and 13, who had run to a neighbor's house, alleging that their stepfather had kicked in their bedroom door and was attempting to assault them with a knife," said Tucson police Captain Mike Gillooly. "During the course of that investigation, it was alleged by the girls that they had been imprisoned within their bedrooms for approximately the last 2 years." After speaking to the girls, officers went to the residence and made entry, after which they discovered a 17-year-old girl that had also been imprisoned but in another bedroom than the bedroom her younger sisters were occupying together. "[They] told patrol officers that they had not seen each other in almost 2 years and were kept separate within the bedrooms within the house," Gillooly said. Gillooly described the living conditions as "filthy," said the victims had not bathed in the last four to six months, and said they were fed only once a day. "At this point the investigation is in its initial stages and the children have been removed and the parents are now in custody," he added. The stepfather, 34-year-old Fernando R., was taken to the Pima County Jail on three counts of kidnapping, three counts of emotional child abuse, three counts of physical child abuse, and one count of sexual abuse with a person under 15 years of age. The mother of the children, 32-year-old Sophia R., was booked on three counts of kidnapping, three counts of emotional child abuse, and three counts of physical child abuse. Although Tucson police released the full identities of both suspects in the case, their last names are being withheld from this report as the charges include one count of sexual abuse. The publication of the names of the parents could potentially lead to the identification of the victims. "Detectives are working very diligently to try and solve this case and put all the pieces together so the people responsible for this can be held accountable," Gillooly said, adding that the parents also own other residences in Tucson. "I can assure you that we are doing all we can to make sure these kids are kept safe." Speaking to local CBS station KOLD-TV, the neighbor who called police described the girls as small and unkempt. She said they were hysterical and visibly shaking when they arrived at the house to ask for help, according to the local TV station, which added that neighbors were unaware any children were living at the house.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1616/police-3-girls-held-captive-at-arizona-home-for-2-years.html>

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