

Six-month-old girl found near dead father in Austin

AUSTIN — A 6-month-old girl survived for five days near the body of her dead father before being rescued by police, authorities said.

Asia McCoy was in critical condition at Brackenridge Hospital on Wednesday, spokeswoman Pam Crowther said. The baby was found Sunday on the bathroom floor near the decomposing body of Willard McCoy, 41. The cause of his death is being investigated but not as a homicide, police said.

Officer Blain Eiben, who had to don a gas mask because of the foul smell inside the home, discovered Asia. He thought the baby, who was encrusted in her father's fluids, was dead, so he started to leave.

"Something changed my mind, and I said no, I need to check her pulse," he said on Wednesday. "I barely felt a pulse, and she barely kicked a leg."

He rushed out with Asia. Officers cleaned out the infant's nose and mouth, poured water on her and rubbed her back until she started making noise. Trying to soothe her, Eiben and officer Doug Drake said, "Come on baby, come on baby, breathe please."

"Whatever we could, trying to soothe her, comfort her," Eiben said. "The baby had been through a lot, I can't even imagine what it would be like to lay there in that condition for five days. We were doing everything we could to soothe her and not to be put any more trauma on her."

Drake said he hasn't yet had a chance to sort out what happened.

"There have been several moments since that time that I stopped and thought about it," he said. "I don't think all the elements of that day have come together yet."

Eiben believes he witnessed a miracle.

"After thinking about it, I think God was in that house that day. How could a baby survive that? He had to be there," said Eiben, who describes himself as religious but no fanatic. "I definitely think it's a miracle."

Asia was discovered when police responded to a welfare call after neighbors hadn't seen her or her father for days.

"They were getting worried and calling his cell phone, paging him, going over to the door and he would never answer, until Saturday and Sunday they noticed a smell and flies," neighbor Angela Sales said.

Child Protective Services has custody of Asia and will place her with a foster home at least initially, spokesman Aaron Reed said. The agency has identified family members who might be appropriate to take care of Asia, Reed said.

Asia was in CPS custody as a newborn but then a judge ordered that McCoy be given custody of her about three months ago, Reed said.

"It was not our recommendation that the child return home," Reed said. Another agency spokesman, Geoff Wool, said CPS was very concerned about McCoy's ability to provide for the child.

Wool said Asia's mother was incarcerated when Asia was born.

CPS monitored Asia while she was in McCoy's custody.

"She was doing quite well," Reed said.

A caseworker visited Asia once a week for eight weeks and then once a month. The last visit was Aug. 14 and everything appeared to be fine, Reed said.

"Clearly this is a tragedy but it could have been much worse if this child had died," Reed later said.

Alejandro Sanz lead winner at fifth annual Latin Grammys

By Anthony Breznican
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — Latin Grammy favorite Alejandro Sanz won four awards and Brazilian jazz songstress Maria Rita collected two Wednesday at a ceremony aimed at uniting Spanish- and Portuguese-language music with the flash and sizzle of American pop.

Sanz won the male pop vocal album award and album of the year for "No Es Lo Mismo" and took home song of the year and record of the year trophies for writing and performing the album's title track. The Spanish crooner, who has previously received seven Latin Grammys and one Grammy, was touring and did not attend the evening's festivities.

Many household names took a back seat among the multiple nominees as Rita and Cuban pianist Bebo Valdes totaled four bids each. Rita won best new artist and best Musica Popular Brasileira Album for "Maria Rita," which was also nominated for album of the year.

"When I was little I used to watch the Grammys with the family and we all knew how important it was to all the artists involved. I'm one of you now," she told the audience after winning her second honor.

Songwriter Milton Nascimento won the best Brazilian song award for writing her song "A Festa," which had been nominated for record of the year.

Valdes won for his collaboration with flamenco singer Diego El Cigala in the traditional tropical album category for "Lagrimas Negras."

The Cuban exile Valdes said he would not use his win as a

means to comment on his homeland's politics. "The music is art. My politics are private," the 85-year-old said backstage. "It's been 24 years since I go to my country."

The entertainment portion of the show offered glitzy, often power-packed displays of music from a number of performers.

Spanish flamenco-singer David Bisbal kicked off the broadcast with a flashy dance number, then sang a romantic power-ballad duet with pop princess Jessica Simpson — she in English, he in Spanish — while they hung in each other's arms and sang face to face.

"The music is art. My politics are private."

— Cuban Pianist Bebo Valdes, after winning four Grammys

Other highlights included a collaboration featuring the hard-rock band Incubus and the Mexican rock/hip-hop group Cafe Tacuba, which won best alternative music album for "Cuatro Caminos."

The show featured another joint performance of Tex-Mex brothers Los Lonely Boys and veteran rocker Carlos Santana, who was named the Latin Grammy person of the year on Monday. Santana and Los Lonely Boys offered up a stirring rendition of the late Ritchie Valens' 1950s Spanish rock 'n' roll anthem "La Bamba."

Among other winners, Jimmy Gonzalez and Grupo Mazz won best Tejano album for "Live En El Valle," while Los Tigres Del Norte collected the Norteno album prize for "Pacto De Sangre."


Meanwhile, Skank's "Cosmotron" was picked best Brazilian rock album, classical cellist Yo-Yo Ma's "Obrigado Brazil: Live in Concert" collected best instrumental album, and the late Celia Cruz's "Regalo Del Alma" received best salsa album.

Robi Draco Rosa won best mu-

sic video for "Mas y Mas," while Rosario's "Del Mel Colores" was honored as best female vocal album. Vincento and Alejandro Fernandez earned best Ranchero album for "En Vivos Juntos Por Ultima Vez."

Comedian George Lopez, star of the ABC sitcom "The George Lopez Show," was host of the fifth annual awards ceremony at the Shrine Auditorium and first appeared on-stage riding a white horse while wearing a Mariachi band outfit and sombrero.

CBS bleeped one of his jokes when Lopez said he understood that President George W. Bush speaks some Spanish. He then uttered some of the language in a phrase that, politely translated, means: "Don't lie to me." In English, he joked that it meant: "Good luck in your future endeavors."




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