

Alleged intoxicated driver in fatal trick-or-treater crash in court

Cadence Boyer, 7, died Sunday night at the hospital

By Paris Achen

Columbian.com | November 4, 2014

A driver accused of hitting and killing a 7-year-old girl who was trick-or-treating Halloween night was under the influence of marijuana at the time, prosecutors say.

Attired in a suicide-prevention smock and hanging his head, Duane C. Abbott appeared Tuesday in Clark County Superior Court on suspicion of vehicular homicide and three counts of vehicular assault.

The grandparents of 7-year-old Cadence Boyer sat in the courtroom's public gallery and held up photos of the girl.

"I wanted to show him what he's done," said Cadence's grandfather, Kevin Boyer. "He took my little princess away."

Her grandmother, Cathy Boyer, said she wanted Abbott to see "what he's done to our family. He has destroyed it."

Cadence Boyer was walking with her mom, Annie Arnold, 32, 30-year-old Chelina Alsteen and an unidentified 6-year-old girl on a sidewalk along Northeast 112th Avenue in east Vancouver when they were struck by a Ford Mustang at about 8:20 p.m. The girls were out trick-or-treating.

All four were rushed to area hospitals. Cadence Boyer died Sunday at Legacy Emanuel Medical Center in Portland. Her autopsy was scheduled for Tuesday, but the Multnomah County Medical Examiner's Office says the results won't be available for several days.

The 6-year-old girl, whose parents asked that her name not be released, is a first-grader at Orchards Elementary, according to Gail Spolar, spokeswoman for Evergreen Public Schools. The girl was in serious condition at a local hospital but was showing signs of improvement, the school said in a letter sent home Monday to parents.

Arnold, Cadence Boyer's mother, was listed in good condition Tuesday at Legacy Emanuel Medical Center. Alsteen remained in critical condition at PeaceHealth Southwest Medical Center.

According to court documents, Abbott said he was changing lanes on northbound Northeast 112th Avenue when he lost control of his vehicle and drove up onto the sidewalk, striking the victims and a utility pole.

He said he smokes 2 to 3 grams of marijuana daily and had smoked his last joint at 5 p.m. Friday, court records say. He also said he has experienced depression and anxiety and uses methamphetamine, the records state.

Vancouver police Officer Brent Donaldson wrote in a court affidavit that Abbott had red, watery eyes and that they looked droopy. His speech also was slurred, Donaldson wrote.

Witnesses ran to the aid of the two injured little girls. One witness pulled one of the little girls away from the Mustang, which was on fire. Another witness held the head of the other little girl until emergency responders arrived.

Witnesses said Abbott crawled out of his vehicle and walked a short distance before collapsing on the ground, Donaldson wrote.

Judge Robert Lewis held Abbott in lieu of \$750,000 bail and appointed Vancouver attorney Jeff Sowder to defend him. He is scheduled to be arraigned on the charges Nov. 14.

Senior Deputy Prosecutor Kasey Vu said Abbott has an extensive criminal history dating back to 1981, including burglary, theft, forgery and escape.