

# Trial starts in death of 3-year-old

## Prosecutors: Girl bitten, assaulted

By **LISA TEACHEY**  
Houston Chronicle

Prosecutors told a jury Thursday that a 3-year-old child, who was beaten, bitten and sexually assaulted, was "brutalized beyond belief" before she died at the hands of her mother's boyfriend.

Tomas Gallo, 27, pleaded not guilty Thursday to capital murder in the death of Destiny Marie Flores in state District Judge Jeannine Barr's court. If convicted, he could face the death penalty.



**Tomas Gallo** admitted he bit the child, prosecutors say.

"The facts you hear in this case are going to disturb you. They are going to shock you and trouble you," Long told the panel. "... Just about every part of poor Destiny's body was completely brutalized."

Long said the child suffered bite marks and bruises over most of her body. She had broken ribs, a crushed skull and two tears on her vagina. Her heart, lungs and kidneys were bruised.

Defense attorney Gerald Bourque told the jury that the South Houston police did not investigate the case thoroughly and the real killer is a convict with a proclivity for biting during sex.

Gallo had been living with Destiny's mother, Christina Arredondo, a few months in a duplex in the 1000 block of Avenue N. Arredondo's sister and her two sons lived there as well.

Arredondo went to work on the day Destiny died but was called home about 1:45 p.m. by Gallo. When she arrived home about 30 minutes later, Destiny was unconscious. South Houston EMS crews saw Gallo driving away from the home as they arrived. He was arrested two days later.

Destiny was pronounced dead shortly after arrival at Columbia Bayshore Medical Center in Pasadena.

Swabs from the bite marks on Destiny's body produced DNA that matches Gallo's, Long said. The child's DNA was found on a pair of Gallo's boxer shorts.

The indictment against Gallo accuses him of pushing the child against an unknown object, causing her death "in a manner and means unknown," and pushing the child, causing her head to strike a bathtub.

Destiny's mother lied to officials at some points, Long said. And instead of calling 911 before making the 30-minute trip home, she called friends to go check.

Long said a rookie South Houston police officer headed the murder investigation and may have made some mistakes. But Long said Gallo admitted to police he was with the children that day and confessed to biting the child.

But Bourque said investigators "did not do their homework" in the case.

Bourque said they did not investigate Gilbert Postel, a violent convict who is known to bite his sexual partners. Bourque said Postel did not live at the house but had a key.

"These officers botched this entire investigation," Bourque said. "If the sniper case (in Virginia and Maryland) had been handled by these guys, we'd be trying a man in a white van. ... Tomas Gallo, the evidence will show, is the driver of the white van."

According to Children's Protective Services of Harris County, a social worker visited the Arredondo home in September 2001, but no signs of abuse were detected then.

In April 2000, Gallo was sentenced in Atascosa County to 10 years deferred adjudication and fined \$1,000 for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.