



OFFICE OF THE  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY**  
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA  
TODD SPITZER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

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**Mother, Father Convicted of Felony Child Abuse for Exposing Newborn Son  
to Extreme Heat and Cold, Withholding Vital Nourishment  
*Baby Suffered Severe Permanent Brain Damage and  
is a Quadriplegic Unable to Talk, Walk or See***

Santa Ana – A mother and father have been convicted of felony child abuse and endangerment for exposing their newborn son to extreme heat and cold and withholding vital nourishment, nearly killing the infant and resulting in severe brain damage that left him a quadriplegic unable to walk, talk, or see.

The parents consider themselves followers of naturopathy, the belief that the body can heal itself, and within weeks of their son's birth began putting the infant in high-temperature saunas and ice baths and refused to feed the baby formula or breast milk because they believed it was toxic.

John Andres Gonzalez, 38, of Lindsay, Calif., and Jaqueline Navarro, 45, of Lindsay, Calif., were each convicted of one felony count of child abuse and endangerment and one felony enhancement of causing great bodily injury to a child under the age of 5 years old.

They each face a maximum sentence of 12 years in state prison. They are scheduled to be sentenced on July 25, 2025, at the Central Justice Center in Santa Ana in Department C39. Gonzalez and Navarro are being held without bail.

The child's paternal grandmother was awarded custody of the child.

Beginning in October 2019, Patrizia Sanchez, the child's paternal grandmother, began contacting the Tulare County Department of Child Welfare Services regarding her one-month-old grandson's welfare. The grandmother continued to call about the child's health 14 more times over the next several months, reporting that the infant was still suffering.

Tulare County was later ordered to pay \$32 million to settle a lawsuit over the failure by its Department of Child Welfare Services to protect the baby from malnourishment that led to permanent brain damage and seizures.

On August 1, 2020, during a trip to Orange County, Gonzalez and Navarro walked into the Hoag Hospital Emergency Room in Newport Beach carrying their limp, unresponsive 10-month-old son. The baby was gray

in color, emaciated, and catatonic. Emergency room doctors discovered the boy had extremely low blood sugar levels and suffered from hypoxia and constant seizures.

After being transferred to Children's Hospital of Orange County (CHOC), the medical director of the Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Team (SCAN) determined that the baby had not been fed properly, resulting in his blood glucose levels becoming extremely low and causing him to have seizures and become hypoxic.

Investigators learned that Gonzalez and Navarro are vegan mucus-free fruitarians and would only feed the baby soy-based baby formula, fruits, and vegetables.

While their infant was hospitalized during the entire month of August, Gonzalez objected to many life-saving treatments and told medical staff he believed that starvation would lead to healing.

Since being released from CHOC, the boy, who is now five years old, continues to suffer from his injuries. In addition to being a quadriplegic, he is blind and unable to walk, talk, or eat on his own. Despite the premier medical care of the SCAN team at CHOC, the neurologic damage he suffered as a result of severe malnutrition is permanent.

"This innocent child suffered from almost the first breath he took because of his parents' beliefs that starvation would cure him," said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. "Instead of curing him, they robbed him of his sight, his ability to take his first steps, to say his first words, and his chance to see the world through the eyes of a child who is seeing everything for the first time. Tragically, he will never get to experience any of those milestones because his parents starved him nearly to death instead of giving him the nourishment he so desperately needed."

Deputy District Attorney Bethel Cope-Vega of the Family Protection Unit is prosecuting this case.

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