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By Monica Alonzo

[News](http://blogs.phoenixnewtimes.com/valleyfever/news/)

**CPS Took Sick Child From Home Unfairly, Says Mom; Takes Fight to Internet**

By [Ray Stern](http://blogs.phoenixnewtimes.com/author.php?author_id=774)Tue., Jan. 13 2009 at 4:37 PM

[1 Comment](http://blogs.phoenixnewtimes.com/valleyfever/2009/01/cps_took_sick_child_from_home.php#Comments)

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A Valley woman is using YouTube and a Web site to accuse local doctors and hospitals of fraud and of CPS of wrongly removing her child from her home.

Leanna Roberson-Smith [writes on her site](http://911wheresthejusticeforchaunell.org/) that CPS officials accused her of [Munchausen Syndrome By Proxy](http://kidshealth.org/parent/general/sick/munchausen.html) and placed her daughter in a foster home following two years of battles with doctors over the girl's mysterious brain ailments.

She includes several pictures on the site of her middle-school-age daughter, Chaunell, including the one at right.

Roberson-Smith (pictured below) writes in a rambling style that Chaunell has severe brain problems that severely limit her abilities, require frequent hospitalization and twice put the girl in a coma. She describes herself having 20 years "in the medical field" and claims she has "EVIDENCE OF MULTIPLE MISTAKES" by doctors, (her caps, not ours), but that no lawyer will touch the case because one of the neurosurgeons' wives is an attorney.

After she found a new surgeon, it seemed to her like the situation was improving. But it only got worse, she writes:

*I thanked the New Neurosurgeon and let him know that I appreciated him taking the time to explain everything to me. At this point I finally felt like things were going to get much better and Chaunell would not have to be in the hospital so much and could get back to a more normal life. But by Monday morning the New Neurosurgeon came back in the room stating everything is "PSYCHOLOGICAL" and that Chaunell does NOT have Brainstem Compression or Chari Malformation. At this point I knew he had spoke with the Last Neurosurgeon because this is the same thing that Barrow's Neurological Institution and Banner Desert Medical Hospital said when Chaunell was in the first coma that she was "willfully doing this."*



Then the officials conspired with CPS to take Chaunell away from her, she states:

*So one day after brain surgery the nurse told me the doctor's wanted to talk to me and I went into a room to find CPS telling me they were taking my daughter. I explained that we have a Major Medical Malpractice Lawsuit and the DOCTORS are doing this to take the EVIDENCE "CHAUNELL" AWAY FROM ME so I cannot take her OUT OF STATES for a SECOND OPINION. CPS did not listen to one word I said and Chaunell was placed in a foster home on 9/3/08. They are trying to charge me with "MUNCHAUSEN BY PROXY" which is where you fabricate or induce illness.*

We sent an e-mail to Roberson-Smith to see if she has any documents that can back up her story, but we haven't heard back yet.

Though Munchausen-By-Proxy is said to be very rare, former *New Times* writer Megan Irwin covered [another case last year](http://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/2008-03-27/news/mother-interrupted-cps-accused-her-of-everything-from-neglect-to-excessive-care-never-proved-anything-and-took-her-daughter-anyway/) in which CPS took a child based on a supposed diagnosis of the syndrome.

Roberson-Smith's two YouTube videos are merely a retelling of the Web tale, though they do provide a glimpse into the personality of the woman, who narrates with little emotion.

As Roberson-Smith tells it, the case seems like an outlandish abuse of power by CPS and the medical personnel. But there are obviously some details missing here -- like whether CPS has any evidence that the mother made her daughter sick, somehow. Without that evidence, though, the mere accusation of Munchausen-By-Proxy shouldn't be enough to force a child out of her home.

We'll get back to you on this one if we learn more -- and if you know something about the case, feel free to write in.