

ARCHIVE

Schiavo's "wounds" examined



By **LEANORA MINAI**

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Terri Schiavo was being examined Monday night in the Morton Plant-Mease Hospital emergency room after workers at her nursing home discovered "fresh puncture wounds" on her arms.

George Felos, the attorney representing Schiavo's husband, Michael, said the wounds appeared to have been caused by a hypodermic needle. A purple needle cap was found in Schiavo's gown, he said.

The puncture marks were discovered Monday at Park Place assisted living home after a 45-minute visit by her parents, Bob and Mary Schindler, Felos said.

Tampa Bay Times

"It appears that someone was either trying to inject Terri Schiavo with something or withdraw fluids from her," Felos said.

Terri Schiavo's father, Bob Schindler, said late Monday he was frightened and disgusted by such innuendo.

Schindler told WTSP-Ch. 10 he was at the hospice Monday afternoon and said nothing was wrong with his daughter when he left.

He said he did not insert a needle into his daughter's arms.

Clearwater police were investigating the incident after Schiavo's husband called them to the nursing home Monday.

Terri Schiavo was undergoing blood tests and other toxicology screenings Monday night at the hospital. No charges were filed.

"Our posture right now is we have to wait and see what the hospital says," said Wayne Shelor, Clearwater police spokesman. "If anything untoward comes up, I'm sure that we would pursue an investigation."

Schiavo collapsed on Feb. 25, 1990, from a suspected chemical imbalance that some doctors think was related to bulimia. She has remained in a persistent vegetative state, but feedings have kept her alive.

Her husband and parents have been battling in court over her fate for years.

Schiavo's husband says she told him before her illness that she would not want to be kept alive. He petitioned the Pinellas-Pasco courts in 1998 to remove her feeding tube.

Tampa Bay Times

Schiavo's parents doubt she had any such end-of-life wishes and believe she could be rehabilitated with therapy.

After five years of bitter litigation over Terri Schiavo's wishes and fate, her feeding tube was removed Oct. 15.

A massive campaign by religious conservatives across the country pressured lawmakers and Gov. Jeb Bush to step in and save her. The Legislature passed a hastily crafted law Oct. 21, and her feeding tube was reinserted that evening.

In December, Schiavo was moved from the Hospice of the Florida Suncoast in Pinellas Park to the Park Place facility while the hospice's aging residential complex undergoes renovation.

Monday's incident adds another wrinkle in the legal saga. Schiavo's husband issued orders denying visits by anyone until the police investigation is complete.

"Mrs. Schiavo was found in a disheveled state with her feeding tube wrapped around her back and an allergy band pulled up very tight on her arm like a tourniquet," Felos said in a press release. "On one arm were four fresh puncture wounds with another fresh puncture wound on her other arm. Also found were fresh scratch wounds, over the puncture wounds as if an attempt were made to conceal the puncture wounds."

Pat Anderson, the Schindlers' attorney, called the development a "ruse to cut off" visits by Terri Schiavo's parents.

"I tell you what it looks like to me," Anderson said. "They're accusing the parents of abusing her, which is insane because the parents have been fighting to take care of her."

Tampa Bay Times

"Maybe one of their quack doctors told them, "Here, we have a substance that can help Terri get better, but it has to be injected,' " Felos said.
