

Man gets life for beating baby to death

■ 10-month-old boy suffered skull fracture, internal bleeding in head

By ERIC HANSON
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RICHMOND — A 34-year-old man was found guilty of capital murder in the beating death of his girlfriend's 10-month-old son two years ago outside his Needville home.

Pete Marin III was sentenced to life in prison because prosecutors did not seek the death penalty.

Marin, who showed no reaction when the verdict was read, was convicted of killing Jake Horrocks on Feb. 24, 2006.

"We are very pleased that we have gotten justice for baby Jake," said prosecutor Suzy Morton.

It took the jury about three hours to reach the verdict Tuesday in the courtroom of state District Judge Brady Elliott.

Death penalty not sought

Defense attorney Ken Bryant said he was disappointed by the outcome.

"The jury speaks, and you have to accept the jury's decision," Bryant said.

A capital murder indictment was filed against Marin because state law allows for capital punishment when the victim is younger than 6.

But Fort Bend County District Attorney John Healey did not seek the death penalty be-



FORT BEND SHERIFF'S OFFICE
GUILTY: Pete Marin III was convicted of killing his girlfriend's son outside his Needville home.

cause the state must prove the defendant poses a future threat to society.

"He has no prior criminal record that could be demonstrated to the jury," Healey said.

Testimony showed the child's mother, Jennifer Horrocks, 33, allowed Marin to sit in his pickup with her son outside her house after Marin asked to spend some time with the boy. She said she went inside and left them together for no more than 20 minutes.

Baby was limp

According to police, after hearing a noise "like a car door," and then a louder noise, Horrocks went back outside.

"When she opened the door,

she encountered Pete Marin holding Jake, who was totally limp," investigators reported in the arrest warrant affidavit.

The defense team tried to convince jurors the injuries were inflicted before Marin took the child outside.

The child's injuries were consistent with the kind of trauma suffered in head-on auto collisions, doctors told police. According to court documents, the baby had a severe skull fracture and internal bleeding in the right side of his head.

Previous injuries

In addition to the massive injuries that caused the death, police say doctors found recent and older injuries indicating the boy had endured severe abuse.

Needville police said Marin told the mother the baby was choking on his own mucus. Horrocks called 911, and the baby was taken to a Richmond hospital, then to Texas Children's Hospital in Houston.

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