

Murder, abduction hearing begins

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SAN BERNARDINO — A preliminary hearing for an Idaho man charged in the 1977 murder of Beverly Wise and the abduction of her two children began Monday, one day after the third anniversary of the crimes.

Michael Gene Iwakiri, 31, of Boise, is charged with accessory to murder and kidnapping and perjury — one of five persons charged so far in the case.

The perjury charge stems from his testimony last month before the San Bernardino County Grand Jury. Investigators believe he lied then and he was arrested shortly after he testified.

They think that the missing children, Brandi Jondell Summers and Tiffani Wise, who were 5 and 2 years old, respectively, when kidnapped from their home here, were babysat by Iwakiri's wife, Juanita, off and on from the spring of 1977 until last summer.

A neighbor of the Iwakiris, Rebecca Boyer, testified at Monday's hearing that she had seen the missing girls at the Iwakiri home at least three times — most recently last June.

In addition, the girls had been at Boyer's home a few times accompanied by Juanita or "Tiny" as she is known, Boyer said in the Municipal Court proceedings.

Under questioning by Chief Deputy District Attorney Joseph Canty, Boyer said she was

friends with both Michael and Juanita and that Juanita, who ran a licensed day care center, had babysat her son for more than three years.

On that day last June when she saw the girls at the Iwakiris, another man, whom Juanita said was her brother, was also there with a woman he said was his wife, Boyer testified.

Boyer recalled that the man yelled sharply several times at the girls. His explanation for his actions, he told her, was because they were "wet or muddy or something — a small thing for the type of hollering," he was doing, she testified.

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