

Patrol Joins Investigation Into Fire That Killed Two Young Boys **News**

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The Missouri Highway Patrol has joined the investigation into a suspicious fire that killed two brothers trapped inside a rural Ray County home Tuesday afternoon.



Authorities said they have not determined what caused the blaze that claimed the lives of 3-year-old Roger Garrison and 1-year-old Ashton Garrison. The fire at 9634 Shach Creek Road, near Route O, was reported at 12:20 p.m. Tuesday. The house was fully engulfed in flames when fire crews arrived.

The Missouri state fire marshal's office and the Ray County coroner's office also are helping the Ray County sheriff with the investigation. Authorities have not determined how the boys died, said Sgt. Collin Stosberg, a Highway Patrol spokesman.

The sheriff's office asked for help from the Highway Patrol's drug and crime control unit, Stosberg said.

The boys' father, Randy Garrison, said he was awakened late Tuesday morning by the screams of his two sons.

Heavy smoke and thick flames poured through the small three-bedroom home as Garrison raced to reach his boys. He fell over a bungee cord or something that kept their bedroom door shut.

"I started punching through walls in the house to their bedroom," Garrison said Wednesday. "I ran outside and started ripping off the outside of the house, punching through walls, and still couldn't get to my kids."

Garrison said he had arrived home from work and gone to bed around 6 a.m. Tuesday. He said the boys and his girlfriend were asleep on the couch.

"Whenever I woke up they were in their bedroom, and she was nowhere to be found," he said.

The boys' bedroom was in the northeast portion of the house. Stosberg said because the investigation was continuing, he declined to comment on whether a bungee cord or something else had been found tied to the bedroom door.

Ray County Prosecutor Danielle R. Rogers said in a written statement that her office has been in contact with the sheriff's office but investigators had not submitted an investigative file for lawyers there to review.

Garrison said he was devastated about the deaths of his sons. He returned to what little remained of his home Wednesday as authorities continued their investigation.

"What would go through your mind after hearing your kids scream bloody murder and basically watching them die in front of you?" he asked.