

Man accused of assaulting 2-year-old

Cantu: 'Girlfriend stood by'

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A 19-year-old San Benito man and his common law wife were arraigned Friday in connection to the sexual assault of a two-year-old girl.

Javier Salinas was charged with aggravated sexual assault of child. Twenty-five year old Leticia Garcia Hernandez, the mother of the alleged victim, was charged with one count of child endangerment and one count of hindering apprehension.

The investigation began last month when Hernandez took her daughter to the Valley Baptist Medical Center. Authorities were called after medical examiners determined the two-year-old suffered severe trauma to the rectum.

Investigator Laurance Cole determined Salinas was the prime suspect. After weeks of investigating, officers arrested Salinas Wednesday. According to the Cameron County Sheriff's Office, Hernandez was allegedly helping Salinas hide from authorities.

After he was brought in for questioning, Salinas confessed to the assault according to officials.

Judge David Garza did not set

bond for Salinas, and he was transported to the Cameron County jail. The victim's mother was charged with child endangerment for allowing the suspect back in to her home and leaving him to care for the children after the incident.

In addition to her two-year-old daughter, Hernandez has a five-month-old girl.

The judge set a \$20,000 bond for each count charged against Hernandez.

The investigation is still pending; however, Cameron County Sheriff Conrado Cantu did express his outrage about the incident. "It's hard when children are involved," said Cantu. He added he was proud of the job Cole and the rest of the investigators did.

"They worked very promptly when they knew where he was hiding out," Cantu remarked. As

See "Assault," page 16



SALINAS



HERNANDEZ

Assault

From "Assault," page 1

the suspects were led away, an officer commented Hernandez claimed to be pregnant again. Her two children are now staying with relatives and Child Protective Services were called into the case.

Hernandez had no previous history with the agency, according to a CPS spokesperson.