Defendant: Mitchelle Blair

Victim(s): Stoni Ann Blair and Stephen Gage Berry, Mitchelle Blair's children

Court Decision: Mitchelle Blair was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for the murder of her two children​

Case facts:

In 2015, 35-year-old Mitchelle Blair was living on the east side of Detroit with her four children when she was evicted for not paying rent. At first glance, nothing about Blair’s case seemed particularly unusual. She was unemployed and had been struggling financially. Relatives say she had previously asked them for money.

When the eviction crew from the 36th District Court showed up at Blair’s home on the morning of March 24, 2015, she wasn’t there. So the crew went inside and began removing furniture from the home.

But when they went to move her freezer, they stumbled upon a horrifying discovery that would send shockwaves through the Detroit community.

## The Bodies In The Freezer

When the Wayne County Sheriff’s Department bailiff opened a white deep freezer located in Mitchelle Blair’s living room, they discovered the frozen body of a teenage girl, wrapped in a large plastic bag. And buried beneath her was another body: a young boy, wrapped in a blanket.

A neighbor didn’t waste any time disclosing Mitchelle Blair’s whereabouts. Police soon found her at another neighbor’s house with two of her children, aged eight and 17. But her other children, Stephen Gage Berry and Stoni Ann Blair, were missing.

After some brief questioning, Mitchelle Blair confessed to killing the children and stuffing them in her freezer. As she was being handcuffed, she reportedly told the police that she wasn’t evil.

“It was just an evil act,” she said, according to [WCNC Charlotte](https://www.wcnc.com/article/news/crime/mom-was-babysitting-when-frozen-bodies-discovered/275-213246985).

Meanwhile, authorities took the bodies to a morgue, where they had to thaw for three days before an autopsy could be performed. The bodies were identified as Stephen Berry and Stoni Blair.

The medical examiner ruled their deaths homicides, naming blunt force trauma as their cause of death. The medical examiner also ruled that “thermal injuries” had contributed to Stephen’s death. It was determined that Stephen was killed in August 2012 at the age of nine, and Stoni was killed in May 2013 at the age of 13.

They had been in the freezer for over two years.

## The Murder Of Stephen Gage Berry

Mitchelle Blair confessed to the murders at the Wayne County Circuit Court. According to the [*Times Record*](https://www.swtimes.com/story/news/nation-world/2015/07/17/mother-who-killed-froze-children/26339985007/), she told Judge Dana Hathaway that she killed the “demons” after finding out they were sexually abusing her youngest son — a claim that has never been substantiated.

Blair said that one day in August 2012, she walked into a room of her Detroit home to find her youngest son simulating sexual activity using toys. Horrified, Blair asked him if anyone had ever touched him that way. The boy allegedly told her that his nine-year-old brother Stephen had.

Blair stormed into Stephen’s room in a rage. After Stephen allegedly confessed to sexually abusing his younger brother, Blair immediately began punching and kicking him. She said she continued to torture her son over a period of about two weeks, starving him, making him drink Windex, asphyxiating him with a plastic bag, and repeatedly pouring scalding hot water on his genitals, causing his skin to peel off.

At one point, she wrapped a belt around his neck, lifted him up, and asked, “Do you like how this feels?”

“Blair lifted Stephen off the ground by holding onto the ends of the belt while the belt was still wrapped around Stephen’s neck,” said a petition to terminate Blair’s parental rights to her surviving children, as reported by [USA Today](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/04/08/abuse-details-mom-detroit-freezer-case/25473037/). “Blair used ‘Force Flex’ bags to put over his nose and mouth, suffocating Stephen until he lost consciousness, and Blair then ‘slapped him awake.'”

Stephen succumbed to his injuries on Aug. 30, 2012. After finding him unresponsive beside a puddle of vomit, Mitchelle Blair wrapped his body in a blanket and hid him in her deep freezer.

## The Murder Of Stoni Ann Blair

Nine months after murdering Stephen, Mitchelle Blair claimed she found out that her 13-year-old daughter Stoni was also raping her youngest son. Blair reportedly asked the boy repeatedly if Stoni had abused him; he repeatedly said no — until Blair threatened to beat him if he didn’t tell the “truth.”

Blair began starving Stoni and brutally torturing her until she died in May 2013. According to the petition, Blair had punched Stoni in the face “a lot,” beat her with a two-by-four, and asphyxiated her with a garbage bag until she lost consciousness.

Later, Blair would claim that while killing Stephen was an “accident,” she had meant to kill Stoni.

“I don’t feel no remorse for the death of them demons,” she later said, according to [PEOPLE](https://people.com/crime/mitchelle-blair-speaks-out-in-jailhouse-interview-with-crime-watch-daily/). “At first, I cried but I would kill them again. There were no other options.”

Mitchelle Blair put Stoni’s body in a plastic bag and stuffed her in the freezer on top of Stephen. Then, she continued on as if nothing were amiss.

Stephen Gage Berry and Stoni Ann Blair were in the deep freezer for almost three years. No one looked for them. The children’s fathers were largely absent from their lives, and Blair had previously taken all of the children out of school. When neighbors asked about the children’s whereabouts, Mitchelle Blair always had an excuse.

## Mitchelle Blair’s Conviction

In court, Mitchelle Blair told the judge that she did not feel any remorse over her actions.

“[They] had no remorse for what [they] did to my son,” she said. “There’s no excuse for rape.”

Prosecutor Carin Goldfarb stated that they found no evidence of rape, and Mitchelle’s oldest child, Gabi, said there was “no concrete evidence” that either of the children sexually assaulted her younger brother.

“My mom became obsessed with this crazy notion that my siblings had sexually assaulted our youngest brother, and she started basically interrogating the youngest,” Gabi Blair said in January 2023 when she spoke out about her horrifying childhood on the [Investigation Discovery](https://www.investigationdiscovery.com/crimefeed/id-shows/evil-lives-here/michigan-mother-killed-her-2-children-stored-their-bodies-in-deep-freezer) true crime show, *Evil Lives Here*.

Gabi claimed that her youngest brother only told Mitchelle about the alleged sexual assault after incessant questioning because “he didn’t know any better.”

“My mom was a ticking time bomb,” Gabi said. “She always had her fuse lit. So anything, the slightest tap, would set her off.”

In June 2015, Mitchelle Blair pleaded guilty to one count of first-degree premeditated murder and one count of felony murder. She is now serving a life sentence at the Huron Valley Correctional Facility in Ypsilanti, Michigan without the possibility of parole.

## Mitchelle Blair’s Surviving Children Recall Her ‘House Of Horrors’

Gabi Blair and her younger brother went to live with their great aunt after their mother’s conviction. They both went back to school, and the young boy was eventually adopted. They have since been in therapy to deal with the trauma and abuse they faced at the hands of their mother.

“I was afraid to even walk by the freezer. Every time I came downstairs to eat breakfast or to play a video game, I had to walk right past the freezer,” Gabi recalled. “But there was nowhere else that my mom could hide the bodies. They were cooped up in a freezer like meat.”

Mitchelle Blair continued to torture Gabi and her younger brother even after the deaths of Stephen and Stoni. Gabi said she was repeatedly burned with a curling iron and beaten with a wooden plank — and that she was constantly terrified she would become the next body in the freezer.

“I made sure to watch what I said around [my mother],” Gabi said. “I already knew that one misstep and this is where I’d end up… I’m happy I was able to make it out alive.”