

...Neighbour: This is not the first incident

ST JOSEPH
Gyasi Gonzales

A WOMAN who lives close to the house in St Joseph where a two-year-old girl was slapped, punched and dragged by her hair for refusing to drink milk said yesterday that the child should not have been left there in the first place.

She said this was not the first time the alleged perpetrator had done this.

The first incident occurred two years ago but it was never recorded or uploaded to social media and the police were never told about it, she said.

She spoke to the *Express* yesterday morning in the porch of her home located near the house where the child was abused.

The woman, who did not

want to be named, denied that the incident happened a week ago as some have reported, adding that it occurred on Tuesday (October 20).

The woman said she was fearful for the life of her children as well as hers, stating that the alleged beater had family with whom she had "no luck" and as a result she demanded not to be named or photographed or the interview would be over.

The *Express* complied.

Disgusting incident

"First of all nobody should want that for their child. It's disgusting", she said.

She said that on Tuesday the disturbing video had been forwarded to her smart phone but she denied uploading it

to Facebook where the video first appeared.

She said that she knows the man very well but they were not blood relatives.

"The child was left in care of the man's wife and whatever transpire, transpire," she said.

She said that the man is not related to the child but rather, "it is his cousin's friend daughter's child".

"Since Tuesday I have not slept because I don't know what that man could do", she said.

She said she had spoken to the suspect over what he had done.

"I tried to reason with him and I told him if you can't (babysit a toddler) then call her parents and let them know that this is too much for you,"

she said.

She added however that, "the person who did it said he don't care about no *** (expensive) police".

She added that the man's relatives lambasted her for speaking to him about how he dealt with the two-year-old.

Since news of the incident broke, she lamented that she has been on the receiving end of scorn by her neighbours who accused members of all three households of being involved in the incident.

"People should not condemn what they don't have any facts about," she said.

Minister: Unfortunate case of abuse

Contacted for comment, Minister of Social Develop-

ment and Family Services, Cherrie Ann Crichtlow-Cockburn, said "it was very disturbing. I find it extremely unfortunate that we have people in this society who will abuse a child in that manner".

The minister explained that under the Children's Authority, "we have the responsibility once we have received a report to go in to do an assessment and move that child to safe environment if need be".

She added, "I would expect that the police will do their job and we will do our part. In fact we would want to speak to parents to ensure the child is in a safe environment without abuse or neglect. We will take the necessary steps to ensure that because at the end of day we prefer to have children with parents but they



DISTURBING: Cherrie Ann Crichtlow-Cockburn

must clearly demonstrate that the child are in a safe and protected environment."

She said that apart from the police, her ministry had Childline as well as other bodies who would be able to intervene in a scenario of abuse as witnessed by many Facebook users and CCN TV6 viewers.

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