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Idaho mom Lori Vallow Daybell believed her kids were 'zombies,' ex-best friend testifies



Terry Collins USA TODAY

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[Lori Vallow Daybell](#), the Idaho mother accused of killing her two youngest children and and husband's late wife, thought that her kids were "zombies," her former best friend testified on Thursday.

Vallow Daybell is accused along with her husband, Chad Daybell, of murder in connection with the [deaths of Joshua "JJ" Vallow, 7, and Tylee Ryan, 16](#), who was last seen a few days before her 17th birthday in 2019. Melanie Gibb, a former close friend recalled when Vallow Daybell told her she thought her kids were zombies.

Gibb testified that it was Chad Daybell who first told Vallow Daybell, then Gibb, that they believed Vallow Daybell's oldest daughter, Tylee Ryan, became a zombie when she was 12- or 13 years old, but they only discovered this when she was 16, [East Idaho News reported](#).

Gibb's comments came after Vallow Daybell's defense team asked District Judge Steven Boyce to strike Gibb's earlier testimony to prosecutors citing the defense didn't receive new testimony. The judge declined the request.

Gibb is considered a key witness in the trial that has already heard [tearful testimony from Kay Woodcock, JJ Vallow's grandmother](#), and [gruesome descriptions of finding the kids' remains from a police detective](#) who was leading the investigation into their disappearance.

The deaths have drawn widespread scrutiny, speculation, and sensationalism that spawned a [Netflix](#) docuseries. Vallow Daybell

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could spend life in prison if convicted on charges of conspiracy, murder, and grand theft. Chad Daybell, who will be tried separately, could face the death penalty.

Vallow Daybell and her husband are accused of killing Chady Daybell's previous wife, Tammy Daybell. Vallow Daybell also faces charges in Arizona of conspiracy to commit murder in connection with [the death of her former husband, Charles Vallow](#), who was killed by her brother, Alex Cox.

LORI VALLOW DAYBELL CASE: Idaho mom used 'money, power and sex,' prosecutors say in her murder trial

Testimony: Vallow Daybell believed her husband and kids were becoming 'dark'

Gibb testified that Vallow Daybell told her about a "light" and "dark" scale after meeting Chad Daybell. Gibb said Vallow Daybell told her people who were light had signed contracts with "the Savior," and those who were dark signed contracts with "Satan" before coming to Earth.

Gibb testified that Vallow Daybell told her Chad Daybell believed in January 2019 that Charles Vallow was taken over by an evil spirit and that Vallow Daybell believed him, according to [KIVI-TV](#).

Gibb then described "castings," a prayer that was used to cast evil spirits out of someone. Gibb participated in a casting with Vallow Daybell in early 2019 to rid Charles Vallow of his evil spirit. Multiple castings were performed for Charles Vallow. Chad Daybell was present for one casting, Gibb testified.

In addition to Vallow being dark, Gibb testified that Vallow Daybell also thought her daughter, Tylee, was dark, and that her son, JJ, an autistic child, had become possessed by an evil spirit.

'THERE WERE PIECES OF BONE, CHARRED FLESH': Idaho mom Lori Vallow Daybell's missing kids were a gruesome discovery, detective testifies

Vallow Daybell believed husband was going to kill her, friend says

Gibb also testified that Vallow Daybell told her that Cox believed in her theories. Gibb said Vallow Daybell told her that Cox came to stay with her because she thought Charles Vallow was going to kill her. Gibb was told Vallow Daybell and Charles Vallow got into an argument and that led Cox to shoot and later kill Vallow, claiming self-defense.

Gibb testified she did not witness the shooting.

Gibb said she remembers asking Vallow Daybell before Charles Vallow died why he would want to kill her. Vallow Daybell said it was because she had a \$1 million life insurance policy. Vallow Daybell said that Charles Vallow had a life insurance policy as well, but if he died, the money would go to Kay Woodcock, JJ Vallow's grandmother.

Prosecutors say Vallow Daybell and Chad Daybell practiced apocalyptic and doomsday-driven religious beliefs as part of a plan to kill the kids and Tammy Daybell. Prosecutors also say the strategy was part of a plot to steal Social Security and insurance money.

Gibb also testified that when she and her boyfriend went to visit Vallow Daybell and Chad Daybell in Rexburg, Idaho, in September 2019, Gibb said she didn't see Tylee or her belongings. Vallow Daybell said her daughter was visiting friends.

Gibb said she did see JJ, but Vallow Daybell said JJ's behavior was changing and he would say things like "I love Satan." Gibb said Vallow Daybell said JJ would climb up on the fridge on top of the cabinets and was acting aggressively, according to [East Idaho News](#).

"Lori tried to explain how he was changing into a more negative type of demeanor," Gibb testified. Gibb said the last time she saw JJ was on Sept. 22, 2019.

Gibb testified that she next spoke with Chad Daybell in November 2019 who told her the Rexburg police would be calling her because they were looking for JJ and told her not to answer the phone. Gibb later said that she thought JJ was with his grandparents, but Daybell told her that wasn't the case.

Gibb testified that she avoided the police's calls and that she was "shocked and perplexed," after Vallow Daybell said the police were "dark" and that "JJ was in danger" because his grandmother tried to kidnap him.

"I wasn't sure what in the world to do," Gibb said, eventually telling police she didn't have JJ and that he had not been with her.

Vallow Daybell wouldn't give her son's whereabouts in recorded call

JJ's grandparents, Kay and Larry Woodcock, reported the two children missing to authorities in November 2019, Vallow Daybell and her husband lied about the kids' whereabouts, [Rexburg Police Det. Ray Hermosillo testified on Tuesday](#).

The Daybells also refused to cooperate with the investigation and left the state. The couple was later found and arrested in Hawaii and then

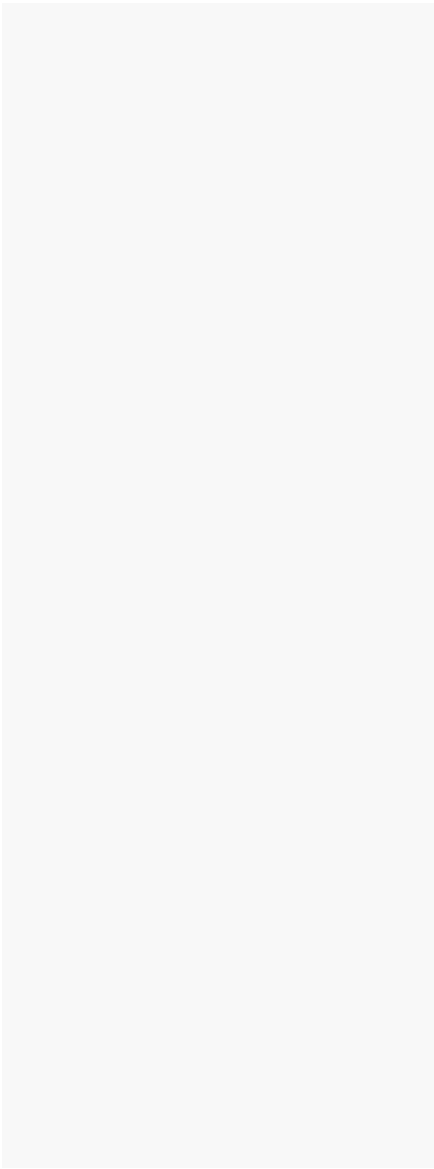
extradited back to Idaho in February 2020. Police found the gruesome remains of Vallow Daybell's kids in Chad Daybell's backyard in June 2020.

During Gibb's testimony, prosecutors played a 20-minute phone call Gibb recorded in late 2019. Gibb persistently asks Vallow Daybell and Chad Daybell the whereabouts of JJ.

"If you knew where JJ was, that puts you in danger," Chad Daybell tells Gibb during the call.

Gibb said Vallow Daybell told her that JJ's grandmother was trying to kidnap her son and that the grandmother, who is working with the police, are both "dark." Gibb pressed the couple to tell them where JJ is located.

"I'm just not telling anybody so that nobody has to say where he is or get questioned where he is so I can keep him as safe as possible," said Vallow Daybell to Gibb. "I know exactly where JJ is. He is safe and fine."



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