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## Vince Young 'hurting inside and out,' mother says

She speaks exclusively to *The Tennessean* after police, psychologist were called on Titans quarterback's behalf

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Felicia Young has seen her son experience the ups and downs that go with being a football star.

On Monday night, she saw 25-year-old Vince Young sink to his lowest point. It ended with Coach Jeff Fisher calling Metro police to search for her son for over four hours, and opened the biggest window yet into the emotional and troubled side of the Titans quarterback.

A psychologist was among those who met with Young at his Brentwood home on Monday, and what she concluded and told team officials led to a bizarre, 24-hour period that ended just after midnight Monday. That's when Fisher met with Young and police at Baptist Sports Park.

Felicia Young said her son has grown weary of all the negativity he faces as an NFL star. On Monday, he indicated to those around him he didn't want to play football any more.

"Vince has gone through a whole lot as a young person," Felicia Young said. "And I think he has done pretty well up to this point. But it is hard, all he is going through right now. He's hurting inside and out.

"But he will be fine if people are prayerful and help my baby boy out. He is a young man. He just needs a lot of love and support."

When the frantic search for Young ended, Fisher and the Titans said the incident had been blown out of proportion. So did some of Young's friends and family.

But the events that led up to it all — and the fact Fisher called police — showed just how much concern the team has regarding the mental state of Young, who suffered a left knee injury in Sunday's season-opening victory over the Jaguars. Young opted not to get an MRI of the knee on Monday; an MRI on Tuesday revealed he has a sprained MCL that could keep him out two to four weeks.

The Titans, meanwhile, were making plans to go on without him.

"In a major city police department we have calls like this all the time about people who fear for their loved ones ... the difference here being Vince Young's notoriety," Metro police spokesman Don Aaron said. "When the police department gets such calls, you have to take them seriously. You never know how these issues will ultimately turn out. The concerns of (Monday) night appear to be unfounded."

## Doctor was concerned

The Titans had concerns about Young that began even before late Monday night.

After Young balked at having the MRI on Monday, Fisher went out and talked to him at his Brentwood home, spending more than an hour with him. The Titans also sent a psychologist, Dr. Sheila Peters, and Tina Tuggle, the team's Director of Player Development, to meet with Young to try to encourage him.

The psychologist said Young was extremely depressed and expressed concerns to the team about Young's safety. Later, Young left the house and sped off in his Mercedes Benz without his cell phone. He couldn't be found for some time, which prompted a phone call to Fisher.

Fisher then called police, who began searching for Young. When Young was finally tracked down, he met with Fisher and police at Baptist Sports Park and eventually went home.

"The people that are closest to Vince inform(ed) us that he had left his house in a state of mind that had them concerned; and that he was unreachable, having left his cell phone at the house," Fisher said in a statement. "(Later) it was determined that those initial concerns by his friends and family were unfounded and he returned home without incident."

According to police, Young had a handgun in the glove compartment of his vehicle, but it was not loaded and Aaron said officers had no concerns about Young trying to harm himself. Young was not charged with any crime because it's not a violation of the law in Tennessee to transport an unloaded firearm with no ammunition in a motor vehicle.

"The fact the gun was in the glove compartment and was unloaded did not present an issue for the officers," Aaron said. "There was no ammunition in the car. The slide was back in a safe position, and it was in the glove box."

## Just watching football

A friend of Young's said on Tuesday the quarterback was with him watching *Monday Night Football* in Steve McNair's office in Nashville when police were searching for Young, and neither had any idea anyone was looking for him. Earlier, the two had stopped by Nuttin' but Wings on Jefferson Street and exchanged autographs for free wings, Raymond White said.

"We sat around watching football and eating chicken wings," White said. "Everything was fine. There was no problem."

Agent Major Adams, who represents Young, said on Tuesday that the quarterback was shocked at all the attention the story generated on Tuesday.

"He understands that people care about him and all that; that is the good part of it," Adams said. "But to have it all blow up like it was ... Vince feels like he can't go anywhere without people knowing where he is 24 hours a day. That's the only negative part of it. He's fine."

## The future is hazy

The events of the last 48 hours, however, have clearly left a lasting mark on Young and the Titans.

On Sunday, before Young was injured against the Jaguars, he initially refused to re-enter the game after throwing an interception and getting booed by fans.

His decision to ignore the team's request for him to have the MRI created even more friction between the player and the team, and indications Tuesday night were that the Titans have turned the team over to back-up quarterback Kerry Collins.

Even when Young returns from his injury, he might not get his job back.

Then there's the question about whether Young is interested in returning, something he mentioned to those who were with him on Monday.

"What would you think, if you were tired of being ridiculed and persecuted and talked about and not being treated very well, what would you do? What kind of decision would you make?" Felicia Young said. "He may not want to deal with it (all), but you have to get to that point before you make that decision first.

"But we're not talking about football right now. We're talking about what would make him happy, and that is the most important thing.

"... You don't want people to be hurting like he is. But it is a growing-up process, and he will eventually come out like gold no matter what. But Vince is going to be OK. We are just going to try and give him some space."