

Sunday, Kassidy would have been 2

Birthday brings up memories of toddler whose life was cut short by brutal abuse

By JENNIFER L. SAUNDERS
Democrat Staff Writer

"May the good Lord be with you down whatever path you roam. And may sunshine and happiness surround you when you're far from home... And may you never love in vain, and in my heart you'll always stay, forever young..."



**KASSIDY
BORTNER**

— From Rod Stewart song, in tribute to Kassidy, selected by her grandmother.

YORK, Maine — On Sunday, Kassidy Caitlyn Bortner should have turned 2, but her second birthday — like her second Christmas — is something she will never celebrate.

Feb. 4, 2001, marks not only the anniversary of the little girl's birth, but is also almost three months to the day when she died as the result of what authorities have called "senseless" abuse.

In the months since Kassidy's death, her mother's boyfriend, Chad E.

☆ **Kassidy**

Please turn to Page 7

Probation hearing delayed 2nd time

By KIMBERLY HOUGHTON
Democrat Staff Writer

ROCHESTER — A probation violation hearing for the man charged with beating to death his girlfriend's daughter in November has been postponed for the second time.

Chad E. Evans, 29, of 191 Milton Road, was scheduled to appear in Rochester District Court on Monday to face two probation violation charges after he was arrested for allegedly killing 21-month-old Kassidy Bortner.

However, Evans' attorney,

☆ **Probation**

Please turn to Page 7

Evans, 29, of 191 Milton Road in Rochester, N.H., and of Keene, N.H., has been indicted on second-degree murder and multiple assault charges against the little girl. Evans was free on \$100,000 corporate surety bail less than a week after his arrest for Kassidy's death.

Pages of court documents illuminate the last weeks of Kassidy's life as a string of beatings and torment that ended only when she succumbed to a blunt force trauma to the head inflicted sometime between Nov. 8 and 9.

"I can't say good-bye to her... It is so senseless. It is so senseless to have somebody do this. Kass will never grow up. She'll never get to play with Barbies — or have another birthday party," said Jacqueline Conley, the child's grandmother, during a January interview with Foster's Daily Democrat.

Instead of a birthday celebration, Conley has Kassidy's photographs, her tiny gravesite in Buckfield and the memories of a toddler who as recently as September appeared to be thriving.

Kassidy's mother, Amanda Bortner, 19, has kept a very low profile since her daughter's death, living alternately between Texas and Seacoast region of southern Maine and New Hampshire.

"Bortner stated that Evans had abused Kassidy for approximately 4-6 weeks," Maine State Police Detective Angela Blodgett noted in an affidavit filed Nov. 17.

"Bortner related several instances when Evans abused Kassidy. Specifically, she cited incidents where Evans grabbed Kassidy's face in a 'palming' fashion and threw her into corners in the home hard enough for Kassidy to strike her head on the floor and/or wall. He would also grab Kassidy's arm and throw her against the wall. On one or two occasions, Evans choked Kassidy until she gagged to stop Kassidy from crying. Also, once when he was angry, Evans picked Kassidy up by the head," Blodgett continued in the affidavit.

Later in the same document, Bortner's sister Jennifer Conley and her boyfriend F. Jefferey Marshall told police they heard Bortner speaking with Evans by telephone in the hours after Kassidy died.

"I know you slowly killed my baby," they said she told Evans. "You wished she had never been born."

Although affidavits in the case clearly show Bortner was fully aware of the abuse her daughter suffered, she has not been charged with any crime in connection with the baby's death.

Authorities had indicated early in January that no further charges are expected to be filed in Maine or New Hampshire. However, when asked last week about the status of the case, New Hampshire Special Assistant Attorney General N. William Delker said he could not comment on whether Bortner will be held accountable in any way for her daughter's death.

It was Bortner who brought Kassidy from the Rochester residence she shared with Evans to Conley and Marshall's Kittery home on the morning of Nov. 9. Bortner would later tell police her daughter was unable to eat or focus her eyes, and Conley and Marshall would say they had never seen Kassidy so badly bruised before that morning.

But documents indicate it was not unusual for Kassidy to be brought to the Kittery residence with bruises. There are multiple references in the court documents that indicate Bortner and Evans brought Kassidy to Conley and Marshall for baby-sitting services because they were sure the pair would not report the signs of abuse.

Marshall made the 911 call to Kittery police from his home at about 12:41 p.m. on Nov. 9, requesting paramedics for a toddler who had fallen from an unknown height. According to court documents, Bortner dropped Kassidy off at about 8 a.m. before going to work.

Before leaving, one affidavit states, Bortner pointed out Kassidy's face and told Conley and Marshall, "Looks like (explicative), doesn't she?"

Kassidy, who was having trouble walking, was placed on the bed in the apartment where she remained without moving or making a sound until Marshall called paramedics at least four hours later.

In the months since Kassidy's death, Marshall has said he is haunted by what the child went through

and is filled with regret that he ever believed the stories Bortner and Evans made up to explain away the bruises.

Although court documents include a statement indicating it was a "family joke" that only Conley and Marshall could watch Kassidy due to her bruises, Marshall has said he has no recollection of ever making such a comment.

"This is about a little baby girl," Marshall told Foster's Daily Democrat in January. "People keep losing sight that what's lost here is a little girl."

At Kassidy's funeral on Nov. 18, Jennifer Conley spoke about Kassidy and thanked her sister for making her the child's godmother — saying she hopes one day to have a child as beautiful as Kassidy was.

According to family and friends who attended the private service, Bortner spoke primarily of how difficult it was to be a teenage mother.

Jacqueline Conley did not speak at her grandchild's funeral. She said she was too overwhelmed with the magnitude of the occasion — with the reality that less than two years earlier she had been in the delivery room with Bortner to see little Kassidy born.

"I will never forget her. There will not be a day in my life I won't think about her," she said from her Buckfield home. Kassidy was laid to rest in a cemetery not far from her grandmother's home. In her casket was placed the pink and white bunny her grandmother had given her the Christmas before.

In the final days of September, she recalled, she had about four days with Kassidy at her Auburn home while Bortner and Evans went to a Mets game. Conley said she saw no signs of abuse.

"It was such a special week. I didn't know how special it was... She called me 'Nah-Nah,' not Nana. I loved that. I loved being called Nah-Nah," Conley said.

In photographs taken during that visit, Kassidy smiles back at her grandmother, cuddling her bunny and kicking her bare feet out before her.

At the time, Conley did not know she would never see her granddaughter again.

Six weeks later, the Maine State

Medical Examiner would perform an autopsy on Kassidy's body. In examining Kassidy's feet, Margaret Greenwald would find clusters of pin-prick marks in the sole of each of them. She found bruises all over the child's body, face and head. If other indications of abuse were found, they have not been released to date as the autopsy report is still pending.

A spokesman for the Maine State Medical Examiner's office said this week that it is typical in a case like this for autopsy results to take a long

time to be finalized, but could not comment further on the status of the case.

"She was extremely young and she was defenseless. It defies any reason," New Hampshire Special Senior Assistant Attorney General Christopher H. M. Carter said after Evans' arrest in November.

"Kassidy was very special to me," Jennifer Conley told Foster's Daily Democrat after the child's funeral. "I'm just trying to deal with it. We've never really had a loss in our family.

That's hard."

"I would have taken her," Jacqueline Conley said. "I think about what she went through (in Rochester). She was brought up around love — people holding her, cuddling her. We told her she was a pretty girl — that we loved her. I keep thinking about her wanting to be here, and no one would bring her — and she didn't know why."

Evans is scheduled to stand trial on the murder and assault charges this November.

Probation

Continued from Page 1

Alan J. Cronheim, filed a motion on Wednesday to continue the hearing because the state has not yet finished providing police reports to the defense council, according to court documents.

Judge Franklin Jones of the Rochester District Court has granted the motion.

"Mr. Evans wishes to continue the probation violation hearing," states the motion. "He waives his right to a speedy probation violation hearing as part of this motion to continue.

"The state, by Senior Assistant Attorney General Christopher H.M. Carter, has no objection to the continuance," it states.

Evans was indicted in December on one count of second-degree murder, two counts of first-degree assault and six counts of second-degree assault for allegedly killing the girl, who died of blunt force injury to her head.

He is also charged with one count of endangering the welfare of a child and one count of simple assault for allegedly putting his hands around the neck of Kassidy's mother, Amanda Bortner, 19.

The probation violation charges were brought forth against Evans after authorities found a case of ammunition, more specifically, 1,400 rifle cartridges, under a work table in the basement of Evans' residence Nov. 17.

Evans was on probation since March 2000 for pleading guilty to two simple assault charges against his former wife, Tristan Evans. He pleaded guilty to slapping her in the

face and grabbing her by the throat. Evans was sentenced to 360 days in jail for each charge, all of which was suspended pending one year of good behavior.

Evans allegedly violated his one year of probation because he first possessed the ammunition and also because he was arrested for Kassidy's murder.

"Chad Evans is alleged by the probation/parole officer to be in violation of the specific rules of probation as contained in the rules of the court," states court documents.

Evans signed an agreement that he would not "receive, possess, control or transport any weapon, explosive or firearm, or simulated weapon, explosive, or firearm," according to court records. He also signed an agreement stating he would not be arrested for any reason during his probation period.

Currently, Evans is free on \$100,000 corporate surety bail. He has signed a waiver of extradition that maintains if he leaves New Hampshire, the state may make a formal demand for Evans to return to the Granite State to face his charges.

Previously, Evans was ordered to have no contact with several witnesses in the case, including Kassidy's mother and Evans' ex-wife, Tristan Evans. However, court documents state that Judge Franklin Jones of the Rochester District Court granted a motion on Dec. 22 to vacate the restraining order between Evans and his former wife.

Kassidy died Nov. 9 at York Hospital in York, Maine, after being

dropped off at a residence in Kittery, Maine by her mother. Bortner was living with Evans at the time of her daughter's death.

Court documents allege that Evans assaulted Kassidy several times over a three-month period — beating the child and throwing her into walls. The indictments also state that Evans allegedly grabbed and squeezed Kassidy's face numerous times, and fractured her leg and arm during separate incidents in the fall and summer of 2000.

An indictment is not an indication of guilt; rather it means a grand jury found there was sufficient evidence to warrant a trial.

Jury selection for Evans' felony charges is scheduled to begin Nov. 5 at the Strafford County Superior Court. A new hearing for Evans' probation violation charges has not yet been scheduled at the Rochester District Court, according to court documents.

IN MEMORIAM

Feb 1961 - Feb 2001

Eileen M. Glover
Lovingly Remembered
by Son

In Special Memory of Cecile Pelletier

1997 - February 3rd - 2001

Lovingly remembered by
The Family