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Thursday, January 3, 2002



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## Evans could face up to life in prison for Kassidy Bortner murder

By BRAD MORIN

Democrat Staff Writer

DOVER — Convicted murderer Chad E. Evans will be sentenced March 21 for the beating death of his girlfriend's 21-month-old daughter.

Evans, 30, formerly of Rochester, was found guilty of second-degree murder and several felony assaults following a December jury trial in Strafford County Superior Court. He face up to life in prison.

Kassidy Bortner died Nov. 9, 2000, after what prosecutors said were weeks of abuse. She and her mother, Amanda Bortner, had lived with Evans at 191 Milton Road in Rochester. Kassidy died at her baby sitter's home in Kittery, Maine, and an autopsy determined she had suffered fatal blunt force injuries.

Evans' sentencing will take place only days after 19-year-old Bortner goes on trial on two misdemeanor charges of endangering the welfare of a child.

Bortner was granted immunity to testify at Evans' trial, but changed her story regarding allegations of abuse by Evans that she made to police immediately after her daughter's death. Bortner had continued to live with Evans in Keene after he was charged with Kassidy's murder and released on bail.

During the two-week trial, Evans' attorneys argued that Kassidy's death was caused by her baby sitter, F. Jeffrey Marshall. Marshall testified that he did not abuse Kassidy, but failed to report the signs of abuse to authorities.

Evans did not testify and his attorneys called a single witness — a medical expert who cast doubt on the time when Kassidy's injuries were inflicted.

Evans was convicted Dec. 21 after 22 hours of jury deliberations. One juror was dismissed for personal reasons about halfway through, and the panel had to start all over again.

After the verdict, defense attorneys Alan Cronheim and Mark Sisti said they would appeal Evans' conviction. The attorneys

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could not be reached for comment this morning.

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A notice of appeal has not yet been filed, but the defense has 30 days from the date of sentencing, according to the Strafford County Superior Court clerk's office.

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