

Evans' hearing is slated

Suspect in toddler death going back to court March 23

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DOVER — The next step in the judicial process for the Rochester man accused in the November beating death of his girlfriend's baby has been set for March 23 at Strafford County Superior Court.

Chad E. Evans, 29, of 191 Milton Road in Rochester was indicted in December on one count of second-degree murder and multiple felony and misdemeanor counts of assault in connection with the Nov. 9 death of Cassidy Caitlyn Bortner. The child was 21 months old at the time of her death.

The preliminary pretrial scheduling conference, which is the first of several hearings in preparation for Evans' November trial, was expected to be held on March 5. However, the court closed due to a snowstorm and the conference was postponed until next week.

A trial has been scheduled for Strafford County Superior Court with jury selection to begin Nov. 5. In addition to the upcoming preliminary pretrial conference, Evans is also scheduled to have a status conference on May 7 and a final pretrial conference on Oct. 25 related to the murder and assault charges.

Kassidy was pronounced dead at York Hospital in York, Maine, on the afternoon of Nov. 9. Early that morning, Cassidy's mother brought her from Evans' Rochester home to Kittery, Maine.

The mother, Amanda Bortner, 19, left the girl at the Conley-Marshall residence in Kittery and went to work.

Bortner would later tell police Evans repeatedly beat her daughter during the two months they lived with him at the Milton Road residence.

Affidavits filed at Rochester District Court in the first days after Cassidy's death state Bortner told police Evans would throw her daughter head-first against the walls of the house, gag her to stop her from crying, grab her face in a "palming" fashion and pick her up by the head.

Bortner and Evans "both routinely told people who inquired that Cassidy's bruises and injuries were the result of her falling down stairs or off the trampoline," Bortner told police after her daughter's death. And, the affidavits state, Bortner told police the number of bruises on the child's body made her and Evans unwilling to seek medical attention for the toddler when she began to act "spacey" and lethargic.

Following a coordinated investigation involving Maine and New Hampshire state police, Kittery and Rochester police and the New Hampshire attorney general, Evans was arrested one week after Cassidy's death. Just shy of one month later, a Strafford County Superior Court grand jury handed down an indictment charging him with murder.

Bortner, who told police she knew of the abuse, has not been charged in connection with reporting the incidents.

Evans, who has spent the last several years working as a district manager for McDonald's restaurants, has been free on \$100,000 corporate surety bail since Nov. 22. There are no conditions restricting Evans' contact with children included in his bail agreement.

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