

# Murder suspect, mother in Keene

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DOVER — The mother of a murdered seacoast toddler has left the area to take up residence 4 miles from the Keene home of the man charged with the crime.

Chad Evans, 29, formerly of Rochester, faces second-degree murder and multiple assault charges in connection with the November beating death of 21-month-old Kassidy Bortner.

Amanda Bortner, 19, was Evans' girlfriend and had been living with him and her daughter at his Rochester home for about two months before Kassidy's death.

According to documents in Evans' case file, Bortner has lived at the home of a Vanessa Mansson at 651 Park Ave., Keene, since at least June.

During proceedings at Rochester District Court last week, Evans' attorney, Alan Cronheim, said his client currently lives in Keene, his former hometown, and travels to Dover and Rochester for his court appearances.

Evans grew up in Keene and once served on the Keene Board of Education.

Several months ago, Foster's Daily Democrat contacted Evans at his residence at 71 Sullivan St., Keene, for comment on the case.

Before declining to comment, Evans asked, "Should I speak with my heart or my head?"

The Web site MapQuest.com lists the distance between the two residences as 3.8 miles.

One of Evans' bail conditions prohibits any contact with Bortner.

Special Assistant N.H. Attorney General Christopher Carter told Foster's Daily Democrat in a previ-

## Toddler's mom and murder suspect both living in Keene

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ous interview that he has not received any information that Bortner and Evans are in contact.

Bortner has not been charged with any crime in connection with Kassidy's death.

Last month, Bortner's formal request for court-appointed counsel was heard at Strafford County Superior Court. Although Bortner was not present for the proceedings, Evans' attorney said she had called him for advice. Cronheim told Judge Tina Nadeau he did not know where Bortner was staying or where she called from.

Although Cronheim was quick to say he told Bortner he could not discuss the case with her, he asked Nadeau to consider Bortner's request.

"It's clear to me that there are witnesses with Fifth Amendment issues. ... There are legitimate Fifth Amendment issues for her," Cronheim told Nadeau during

the status conference last month. The Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gives people the right not to incriminate themselves in crimes.

On July 13, Nadeau ordered the court to appoint an attorney for Bortner, writing in her order that "both parties have indicated that she has potential Fifth Amendment concerns in the event she were called to testify."

According to statements she made to police during the investigation of her daughter's death, Bortner knew Evans had abused Kassidy for approximately four to six weeks but agreed not to seek medical treatment for the toddler "because she had bruises from Evans' conduct. In addition, Bortner and Evans discussed and agreed to lie about the causes of Kassidy's injuries," a N.H. State Police affidavit states.

During the July status conference, Cronheim suggested Bortner might require a Richards hearing — a court proceeding

that can be granted in cases where a witness' statements could disclose their participation in criminal activity.

Nadeau said at the time that any decision on how to deal with Bortner's Fifth Amendment issues would come after her court-appointed counsel was appointed.

However, more than a month later, Bortner does not have an attorney. According to the Evans file at Strafford County Superior Court, correspondences were mailed to Bortner in June and a financial affidavit was mailed on Aug. 6.

As of Thursday afternoon, Bortner had still not returned the forms necessary to obtain the court-appointed attorney she requested.

A Strafford County Superior Court clerk confirmed the appointment cannot be made until Bortner has returned the financial affidavit.

Repeated attempts to reach Bortner or Mansson at the residence have been unsuccessful.