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## Amanda Bortner in court today as trial looms

By JENNIFER L. SAUNDERS

Democrat Staff Writer

DOVER — The mother of a 21-month-old girl who was beaten to death was scheduled to be in court this morning in preparation for her upcoming child endangerment trial.

Amanda Bortner, 19, was charged in November with two counts of endangering the welfare of a child for allegedly failing to protect her daughter, Kassidy Bortner, from abuse and to seek medical treatment for her injuries.

Kassidy died on Nov. 9, 2000, after being abused for up to three months by Bortner's live-in boyfriend, Chad E. Evans.

Evans, 30, formerly of Milton Road in Rochester, was convicted in December of second-degree murder, multiple counts of assault and endangering the welfare of a child in connection with Kassidy's death.

He was also convicted on one misdemeanor count of assault for placing his hands on Bortner's neck during an argument.

Bortner, who has a last-known address of Endicott Road in Weirs Beach, traveled daily to Strafford County Superior Court for Evans' trial.

At one point in her testimony, Bortner stated she still loves Evans and misses him.

During the proceedings, which lasted almost a full month from jury selection through the verdict, Bortner was compelled by the state to testify and given immunity. Nothing Bortner said in court can be used against her at her upcoming trial unless it is proven she perjured herself while on the witness stand.

In the hours and weeks after Kassidy's death, Bortner told police that Evans repeatedly abused her daughter by grabbing her face, arms and legs, and throwing her into the walls of their Rochester home.

Bortner lived with Evans in violation of his bail conditions for about eight months between December 2000 and August 2001.

At that time, Evans' bail was revoked and he has been incarcerated in the Strafford County House of Corrections ever since.

During the trial, Bortner changed her story from what she told police previously. When questioned about his treatment of her daughter, she said Evans was rough with Kassidy and grabbed the toddler's face with enough force to cause bruises. Bortner said she did not think it hurt her daughter.

She also testified that Evans "roughly placed" Kassidy in the corner and she hit her head against a door, but again said she did not believe it hurt the child.

When the jury viewed a videotape taken of Evans' interview with police about seven hours after Kassidy's death, they heard him suggest that Bortner was mistreating the child.

"Amanda would sometimes hit her. She bruised from that ... I think Amanda — I think that job at home was hard on her ... She had two solid weeks or three solid weeks with Kassidy," Evans told police, stating that after Bortner began spending more time with Kassidy she began calling her "a little bitch ... a little s—t."

Maine Chief Medical Examiner Margaret Greenwald testified that Kassidy died after receiving blunt-force trauma to her head and abdomen. She stated the child received multiple blows to the head and face and one or two blows consistent with a punch or kick to the stomach.

In autopsy photographs, Kassidy had injuries on her head, face, ear, torso, back, legs and feet.

At the time of her death, Kassidy was also suffering from at least three untreated bone fractures in her arms and legs and pin-prick abrasions on the arches of her feet.

If Bortner is convicted on the two charges of endangering the welfare of a child, she could spend up to one year in jail on each.

Bortner's court-appointed attorney through the Evans proceedings and for her upcoming trial is Patricia O. Wiberg of Dover. Representing the state during Evans' trial were Senior Assistant Attorneys General Simon Brown and N. William Delker. Evans was defended by Mark Sisti and Alan Cronheim.

Evans will be sentenced in March on the murder and assault charges, the same week Bortner is scheduled to stand trial on the two misdemeanor counts pending against her. Sisti has said he will seek an appeal once sentencing is complete.

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