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Bortner case set Nov. 18 in Strafford County Superior Court

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DOVER — A 20-year-old Rochester woman charged with child endangerment in connection with her daughter's death will stand trial Nov. 18 in Strafford County Superior Court.

Amanda Bortner appeared in court Thursday morning for a final pretrial hearing in preparation for her trial. David Ruoff, a prosecutor with the New Hampshire attorney general's office, and Bortner's court-appointed attorney, Patricia Wiberg conversed with Judge Bruce Mohl at the bench during the brief hearing.

Bortner's 21-month-old daughter, Kassidy Caitlyn Bortner, died Nov. 9, 2000, from blunt-force trauma to the head and abdomen after at least two months of abuse at the hands of Bortner's live-in boyfriend, Chad E. Evans.

Evans, 31, was convicted in December of second-degree murder and counts of assault in connection with the toddler's death. He is serving a sentence of 28 years to life in New Hampshire State Prison.

Shortly before Evans' trial began, Bortner was charged with two misdemeanor counts of endangering the welfare of a child for allegedly failing to protect Kassidy from his abuse.

Following Thursday's pretrial hearing, Ruoff said jury selection is set to begin at 9 a.m. on Nov. 18 with testimony in the case expected to follow that afternoon.

Ruoff said he expects the trial will last about five days. The state's witness list includes 17 people who may be called to testify against Bortner, including who is being flown in from Texas for the trial. The defense has not yet filed a witness list.

The charges against Bortner allege she violated a duty of care to her daughter in the weeks and hours before the child's death. One of the charges specifically refers to Bortner's behavior the day Kassidy died.

Bortner drove Kassidy from Evans' house in Rochester to the apartment of her sister, Jennifer Bortner-Conley, in Kittery, Maine, court documents state.

Kassidy received the blows that would ultimately cause her death and was

exhibiting signs of distress by the time Bortner got her ready for the drive to Kittery, according to testimony at the trial.

Bortner-Conley and her boyfriend, F. Jefferey Marshall, told police after Cassidy's death that Bortner pointed out the bruises on the toddler's face and indicated Evans had caused them.

Bortner and her sister then left Cassidy on a bed in the Kittery apartment and went to work. Marshall testified during Evans' trial that he called police several hours later when he realized the toddler was unresponsive. Cassidy was pronounced dead at York Hospital a short time later.

If Bortner is convicted on the two child endangerment charges, she faces a maximum jail term of two years. Neither Ruoff nor Wiberg could comment on the specifics of the case against Bortner.

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