

## **Bortner gets maximum 2-year sentence in baby's death**

By HOLLY RAMER

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DOVER, N.H. (AP) — A young mother was sentenced Friday to the maximum two-year jail term for failing to protect her toddler from the abuse that killed her.

Amanda Bortner, 20, was convicted of two counts of child endangerment in November, two years after her 21-month-old daughter, Cassidy, was beaten to death.

"Why couldn't I see it?" Bortner sobbed as she addressed the judge in Strafford County Superior Court. "It kills me to know I could have stepped back from the situation and put all the pieces together. ... I should have taken steps to save her."

Bortner has been jailed since late December, when she had her bail revoked for having frequent phone conversations with her daughter's killer. Bortner's boyfriend, Chad Evans, was convicted of second-degree murder and is serving 28 years to life in prison.

At the bail hearing, Bortner read a brief statement in which she said the conversations gave her a "sense of peace."

"Kassidy was gone. Chad was gone. My family was gone," she said.

Prosecutors said Bortner failed to protect Cassidy from months of abuse by Evans. On Nov. 9, 2000, she drove the baby from Evans' home in Rochester to her sister's home in Kittery, Maine, even though Cassidy was badly bruised and in distress.

Bortner's sister told police that Bortner pointed out the bruises on her daughter's face and said, "Looks like s—, doesn't she?" according to court documents. She also said Bortner indicated that Evans had beaten the girl.

Kassidy died at a hospital later that day after the sister's boyfriend, Jeffrey Marshall, who was babysitting, called 911 to report that Cassidy was unresponsive.

Bortner did not testify at her trial. Though she told police soon after Cassidy's death that Evans frequently abused her daughter, she later accused Marshall of killing the little girl.

Her lawyers had recommended a sentence of three months.