

Mother of slain girl sentenced for failing to protect her

N.H. judge orders maximum, 2 years

ASSOCIATED PRESS

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

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. Bortner's boyfriend was convicted of the killing.

"Why couldn't I see it?" Bortner sobbed as she addressed Judge Tina Nadeau 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."

Nadeau said she didn't doubt Bortner's love for Cassidy, but said

Bortner is lucky she was not charged as an accomplice to the child's murder, which would have carried a much harsher sentence.

"Kassidy had only one place to turn for protection, and that was the defendant," Nadeau said.

Two of Bortner's friends urged the judge to be lenient, saying Bortner has suffered terribly and is striving for a better life. But her own family asked the judge to impose the maximum sentence.

"You never loved Kassidy. What mother would turn her back on her own daughter?" said Bortner's sister, Jennifer Conley. "I love you and I miss you," she said, sobbing. "But I feel you deserve the maximum sentence."

Assistant Attorney General Da-

vid Ruoff said he wished he could have asked for a longer sentence, but the law doesn't allow it.

"It is difficult to conceive of a worse violation of the child endangerment law than the one proven in this case," he said. "We have the worst-case scenario, the most innocent victim and a defendant who hasn't really learned from her conduct."

Bortner has been jailed since late December, when she had her bail revoked for having frequent phone conversations with her boyfriend, Chad Evans, who is serving 28 years to life in prison.

Evans is appealing his conviction on second-degree murder charges, alleging that Bortner's sister's boyfriend actually killed Cassidy.

'It kills me to know I could have stepped back from the situation and put all the pieces together.'

AMANDA BORTNER
*Mother of slain toddler,
sentenced in N.H.*



Amanda Bortner cried yesterday in court during a victim impact statement from her mother. Bortner was sentenced for child endangerment in the death of her 21-month-old daughter.

AP PHOTO