

Editorial

Amanda Bortner is still guilty of not caring enough

Walsh show was cheap exploitation of Kassidy's death

Amanda Bortner still doesn't get it. A jury of 12 men and women found her guilty of endangering the welfare of her defenseless 21-month-old child.

Amanda Bortner is in jail because she apparently cared more for her boyfriend, Chad Evans, than she did her toddler daughter. Kassidy Bortner is dead because, in part, her mother didn't do enough to protect her. A separate jury found Evans guilty of the brutal beating death of Kassidy.

Few cases in recent years have evoked the degree of outrage felt by the people of Strafford County following the murder of Kassidy Bortner.

A child barely beyond infancy died at the hands of Chad Evans while her mother failed to protect her.

Amanda Bortner is still in denial. She still will not accept complicity in Kassidy's death.

In an episode of the nationally televised "The John Walsh Show," shown locally Wednesday on ABC affiliates, Amanda Bortner contended she "was coerced into making a false confession" and she repeated her defense of Chad Evans. She told Walsh the state had no physical evidence linking Evans to the brutal killing. While there may have been no physical evidence, one jury was convinced the testimony eliminated reasonable doubt of his guilt. There was the absence of similar doubt when a second jury found the state had made its case against Amanda Bortner on two counts of endangering the welfare of a child.

Bortner is relentless in her claim that it was the person who baby-sat Kassidy who killed her. Medical evidence at the time of the child's death showed Kassidy had five fractures of varied ages: one in each arm, two in one leg and one in her hand.

The state's case has again been believably presented by Assistant Attorney General David Ruoff.

"She had bruises over bruises at the time of her death," Ruoff said from his office in Concord on Wednesday. When, during "The John Walsh Show," Bortner was asked why she continued to bring Kassidy to the babysitter, her reply was she was "young and naive."

Oh, sure. Animals in the wild have better instincts than Amanda Bortner would have us believe she possessed in the time preceding Kassidy's death.

If Bortner is, indeed, "naive," it is in believing her tale is any more credible than when her defense was presented to a jury.

Ruoff points out that while the baby sitter's story has remained the same through initial interviews and two trials, Bortner's account of events changed between the time of the investigation of Kassidy's death and the time of her boyfriend's trial in December 2001. It was not until earlier this month that Bortner was sentenced to two years confinement in the Strafford County House of Corrections. Evans is serving 28 years to life at the state prison.

Amanda Bortner showed no emotion during her appearance on "The John Walsh Show." It was as if she were a disinterested party. A coldly impartial observer of something afar.

A word about "The John Walsh Show" and television of similar content. They are of no factual or intellectual value. It's entertainment — the kind of entertainment designed to appeal to base instincts; an appeal to people who get their jollies looking into the lives of others; people who may often identify themselves as victims under other circumstances.

Daytime television is designed to sell soap. If they have any social value, it is allowing some of us a better look at the intellectual poverty of some of the participants and producers of the shows.

Assistant Attorney General Ruoff was correct in bringing the public's attention to the lack of research in Walsh's interviews. At the same time, we trust he knows daytime talk shows have nothing to do with truth or reality. They exist to titillate; to allow audiences a voyeur's experience without going to jail for it; to sell soap.

There is only one victim in all of this — Kassidy Bortner. She was deprived of the life she deserved.

As for Amanda Bortner and Chad Evans — *they* received a small measure of what they deserved.