

ESSEX COUNTY PROSECUTORS OFFICE PRESS RELEASE



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Subject: Father Sentenced to Life in Prison for Killing Daughter
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Category: Child Endangerment,Homicide
Defendant(s): Travis Hartsfield

Dec. 22, 2014

Father Sentenced to Life in Prison for Killing Daughter

Newark – Acting Essex County Prosecutor Carolyn A. Murray announced today that Travis Hartsfield, Jr., 28, of Newark was sentenced to life in prison for the March 2011 murder of his 20-month-old daughter, Asiyah Hartsfield.

The Honorable Michael L. Ravin, Judge of the Superior Court, imposed sentence. In October of this year a jury convicted Hartsfield of murder and endangering the welfare of a child. Today, Judge Ravin sentenced Hartsfield to life which is 75 years under New Jersey law. Under the No Early Release Act, he must serve 85 percent of his sentence before he is eligible for parole.

Hartsfield, who was unemployed, was supposed to be taking care of the baby while the mother went to one of her two jobs. Angry that the child would not eat, the state maintained he punched in her in chest, causing the internal bleeding that killed the baby.

Essex County Assistant Prosecutor Michele Miller, who tried the case, asked the judge to impose a life sentence.

“He killed his own daughter, his own flesh and blood. This was murder. When he became a father, he had one job in life that he had to succeed at and he failed miserably,” said Assistant Prosecutor Miller. “The last image Asiyah had was an image of her father, a person she looked at with loving eyes and a person she thought loved her, violently attacking her. He punched her because she refused to eat her macaroni and cheese and then he turned his back on her and went back to his video games. He smoked a cigarette while she was bleeding to death less than two feet away.”

On the morning of March 14, 2011, the baby’s mother left the child with Hartsfield so she could go to work. Around 12:30 am he called the baby’s mother saying the baby was not breathing and was ice cold to the touch. She told him to call 911 and then took a taxicab to his house. By the time she arrived at the house, the baby had been taken to the hospital by emergency medical personnel, where she was pronounced dead.

Hartsfield gave a statement to authorities admitting he punched the baby after she refused to eat. The child, who weighed just 22 pounds, had a history of eating problems and was diagnosed with

a heart murmur.

At trial, Miller said the physical evidence contradicted Hartsfield's version of events. She said the child had bruising on her face, head, arms and mouth. She said those injuries were inconsistent with someone making a split decision or his defense that CPR caused the majority of her injuries.

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