

ESSEX COUNTY PROSECUTORS OFFICE PRESS RELEASE



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Subject: Man Convicted of Murdering His 20-Month-Old Daughter
Date: October 31,2014
Category: Child Endangerment,Homicide
Defendant(s): Travis Hartsfield

Oct. 29, 2014

Father Convicted of Murder for Killing His 20-month-old Daughter

Newark –Acting Essex County Prosecutor Carolyn A. Murray announced today that an Essex County jury convicted Travis Hartsfield, Jr., 28, of Newark of murdering his 20-month-old daughter following a 5-week trial before the Honorable Michael L. Ravin, Judge of the Superior Court.

Hartsfield, who was unemployed, was caring for the toddler while the mother worked two jobs. The mother left the little girl, Asiyah Hartsfield, with the father on March 14, 2011 and in the early morning hours of March 15, 2011, Hartsfield called the mother to tell her the baby was not breathing and felt ice cold, according to testimony at the trial.

She told him to call 911. Medical personnel responded to the scene and rushed the baby to University Hospital where she was pronounced dead around 2 a.m. Hartsfield later admitted to police that he punched his daughter multiple times in the chest when he could not get her to eat. He said that after he punched her she cried and vomited and he told her to go lay down because he was still mad. The little girl had a history of eating problems. She also could not walk or talk and as an infant had been diagnosed with a heart murmur.

On Oct. 28, an Essex County jury convicted Hartsfield of first degree murder and second degree endangering the welfare of a trial.

He is scheduled to be sentenced on Dec. 22. He faces 30 years to life in New Jersey State Prison.

Assistant Prosecutor Michele Miller, who tried the case, said, “We are extremely grateful to the jury for seeing this case for what it was – this was an intentional, purposeful, deliberate act of an adult male upon a small child. He punched her with such force that he split her liver and she bled to death. And while she lay dying on the bed behind him, he sat less than three feet away from her playing video games. Once he discovered her not breathing, he waited at least 40 minutes before he called 911. When confronted by law enforcement after the autopsy revealed Asiyah died of blunt force trauma, the defendant admitted that he delivered the fatal blows to her chest that killed her. That’s murder.”

Essex County Prosecutor's Office Newark, NJ