



NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TATIANNA LIGHT PLEADS GUILTY TO SUFFOCATING INFANT SON

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson announces that Tatianna N. Light, 26, of Springfield, MO pled guilty today to one count of murder in the second degree for killing her eight week old son, Kaiden Light. The defendant was scheduled to start a bench trial before the Honorable Michael Cordonnier, but instead entered her guilty plea.

Prior to his death, Kaiden has been voluntarily placed with a family member as part of safety plan instituted by Children's Division. The defendant complied with all the requests of Children's Division and Kaiden was returned to the defendant on October 4, 2010. The defendant smothered Kaiden to death on October 5, 2010, less than 24 hours after she had regained custody of Kaiden. When authorities were notified of Kaiden's death, the defendant claimed that she placed Kaiden on her bed to do laundry and when she returned Kaiden had rolled over on the bed, was facedown, had blood coming from his nose, and was not breathing. She claimed that she performed CPR for approximately 30 minutes before calling 911. She also admitted that she had cleaned Kaiden up, changed his clothes, did some laundry, and called a family member before calling 911.

The defendant was interviewed by Detective Steve Schwind on the same day that Kaiden died. Initially, the defendant persisted in her claim that Kaiden had rolled over and smothered by accident. At one point, she even suggested the family dog had smothered Kaiden by jumping on the bed and laying on Kaiden's head. When Detective Schwind confronted the defendant with the inconsistencies in her story, the defendant confessed to suffocating Kaiden with pillows. She admitted that she knew she killed Kaiden because he "quit moving" and "quit breathing." When asked how long she suffocated Kaiden with the pillows, the defendant answered "over an hour." When

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Detective Schwind tried to clarify if it took Kaiden an hour to stop moving, the defendant responded, "He stopped and then I let go cuz I thought he was gone and then he started breathing again and it freaked me out and I was like 'oh shit' and I did it again. Because I seen the way he was, he was going to be mentally retarded." She also said, "I finished it off because of the way he was acting." She said that she killed him because she was tired of everyone telling her that she wasn't ready to have a child and she couldn't take care of him. She further confessed that, during the time she was smothering Kaiden, she heard knocking on the door which was a Children's Division investigator who was scheduled to do a home visit on that day and she ignored the door and continued to smother Kaiden.

After she confessed, the defendant began asking police to take her to the "psych unit" and insisted that, if she went to jail, she would kill herself. She further told the officers that she knew "two things to say to be taken to the psych unit without going to jail."

There is no plea agreement in this case, therefore, the defendant is subject to the entire range of punishment for murder in the second degree. Murder in the second degree is a class A felony which carries a range of punishment from ten years to life (or thirty years) in the Missouri Department of Correction. Murder in the second degree is a dangerous felony, so the defendant would have to serve 85% of her sentence before she is eligible for parole. Judge Cordonnier set a sentencing hearing for February 21, 1:30 PM following a sentencing assessment report by the Department of Probation and Parole.

This case is being prosecuted by Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson and Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Stephanie Wan. It was investigated by the Springfield Police Department and Sergeant Steve Schwind was the lead investigator assigned to the case.

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