



NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Woman Sentenced to Life in Prison for Murdering Her Infant Son

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson announces that on Friday, February 21, 2014, Tatianna N. Light, 27, of Springfield, Missouri was sentenced to life in prison for smothering her two month old son, Kaiden Light, to death in October 2010. Light previously pled guilty to murder in the second degree on the day her trial was set to begin in December 2013.

Prior to his death, Kaiden had been voluntarily placed with a family member as part of a 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. On October 5, 2010, the defendant smothered two-month old Kaiden to death with a pillow over the course of an hour. After she killed him, the defendant did laundry, cleaned, and re-dressed the child before calling 911. Initially, the defendant told police that the baby had rolled over and suffocated while she was out of the room. When detectives confronted her with the inconsistencies in her story, the defendant admitted that she had smothered her child to death with the pillows in her bedroom. She admitted that she had been having thoughts of killing Kaiden for about a month and 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. The knock on the door was a Children’s Division worker scheduled to do a home visit on that day. Though Light heard the knocking she 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

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jail.” When she did not get assurances from the detectives that she would be taken to the “psych unit”, the defendant made several threats to kill herself and the only way the police could stop her from killing herself was if they took her to the “psych unit.”

After the defendant was charged in connection with Kaiden’s death, the defendant wrote a letter to the judge who was presiding over her case at the time and claimed that she tripped over her dog, fell on Kaiden and accidentally suffocated Kaiden.

At the sentencing, First Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Stephanie Wan requested life in prison, the maximum sentence, for the murder. In support of that request, the Prosecution noted that this was not an individual who snapped as evidenced by the fact that Light admitted to thinking about killing Kaiden for about a month, that it took an hour to kill Kaiden, that Kaiden had likely suffered, and that any remorse the defendant now showed was insincere as demonstrated by how long it took for her to plead guilty and the many inconsistent stories she told others. The Prosecution also noted that the defendant had many resources and alternatives to killing Kaiden, including the Children’s Division worker who was standing on her porch as she was killing her child. The Children’s Division worker testified at the sentencing that she was always encouraging to the defendant and that her goal was to help the Light be a good mother to her son. Several other witnesses presented victim impact statements and spoke about how Kaiden touched their lives and how Kaiden’s death affected them.

The defendant’s attorney requested mercy from the judge, citing the defendant’s turbulent and abusive childhood, as well as her history of mental health issues. The defense argued that the defendant had been overwhelmed by the demands placed on her by Children’s Division, her feelings that a family friend might be trying to steal her son from her, and that she simply snapped and killed her son. At sentencing, the defendant claimed that she was very sorry for Kaiden’s death. She stated that she was a drug addict and took more medication than she should have in an effort to get high. She claimed she heard voices through all the medication that told her to kill Kaiden and she went through with it.

Judge Cordonnier firmly rejected the defense’s argument. During the sentencing, the Judge noted that the defendant had not shown any responsibility in the three years since she killed her son. He noted the defendant had told many inconsistent stories regarding the death of her son and her most recent story given at sentencing was inconsistent with her confession. Judge Cordonnier noted that the defendant’s behavior throughout the investigation was “manipulative”, especially her demands to be taken to the “psych unit” after her confession. Judge Cordonnier

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declined to speculate on why the defendant killed her son, but noted that everything indicated to him that there was something “sinister” going on. Judge Cordonnier then sentenced Tatianna Light to life in the Missouri Department of Corrections. Murder in the second degree is a dangerous felony, so the defendant will have to serve twenty-five and one half years in prison before she is eligible to be considered for parole.

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

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