

15 years for killing baby

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Article Last Updated: 05/25/2007 12:19:17 PM EDT



*THE FACE OF TRAGEDY: Devin Logan, who died June 21, 2005, from "shaken baby syndrome."
COURTESY PHOTO*

NASHUA -- Thinking he was just a victim like everyone else, Frank Bashore unwittingly took the killer of his infant great-grandson into his home in 2005.

Six months later, the truth came out. Andrew Roberts, of Nashua, had shaken his son to death -- a crime he initially tried to pin on his own mother.

Emotion was palpable in Hillsboro County Superior Court yesterday as it was announced that Roberts, 20, will spend at least 15 years in New Hampshire state prison for fatally shaking 6-month-old Devin Logan in 2005.

"What kind of anger and rage could cause a young and seemingly loving father to kill his own innocent baby?" asked Bashore, a Westford resident. "And what kind of black heart could cause him to then blame his own mother for the tragedy?"

Jessica Logan, 20, a 2005 graduate of Tyngsboro High School, is Devin's mother. At the sentencing, she read a letter written by her 13-year-old sister, Carly Hapgood.

"I never thought at 13 I'd be writing a letter about the death of my nephew," said Logan, who lives in Tyngsboro, teary-eyed as she read her sister's words. "How the heck could he kill his own son?"

In court yesterday, an emotional Roberts apologized.

"I never had any intention of hurting Devin, because I loved him so very much," Roberts said, breaking down into tears. "If I could relive that day, I'd do anything, but I can't. So I'm prepared to take my punishment."

Before the sentencing, prosecutors told a chilling story of how Roberts, fearing jail time, tried to convince the world that his own mother -- Bernadette Roberts -- was responsible for Devin's death. It was at her home where the assault that ultimately led to Devin's death took place.

But the truth, said prosecutors, is that in the early-morning hours of June 19, 2005, Roberts awoke to his son crying, picked the baby up by his armpits and violently shook him.

Devin was rushed to Children's Hospital in Boston later that day after being discovered unresponsive by Bernadette Roberts. He died two days later.

Doctors concluded Devin died of severe brain and spinal injuries as a result of "shaken baby syndrome." Questioned by police, Roberts concocted a story that while he was alone in a hospital room with his mother, she admitted to shaking Devin. Roberts later repeated the tale to a grand jury.

But in June of last year, police interviewed Roberts again. This time, he admitted he was the one responsible for Devin's death.

"He told police he had blamed his mother because she was the last one to have the baby before the 911 call," said state Assistant Attorney General Karen Huntress. "He said he was afraid if he told the truth about what happened, he would go to jail for the rest of his life."

Roberts was scheduled to stand trial in June on charges of second-degree murder, but earlier this month he accepted a plea bargain that will see him serve between 13 and 26 years for manslaughter. He was also sentenced to an additional two to four years for perjury and another year for filing a false police report.

As officers led Roberts out of the courtroom following the sentencing, his mother sobbed and had to be consoled by her husband, Richard.

Jessica Logan got a chance to speak with Andrew Roberts in a private room after the sentencing. It was their first face-to-face encounter since his arrest almost a year ago.

Logan, who was in a three-year relationship with Roberts before his arrest, said the details of their discussion are private. But she said it was the conversation she was hoping for.

"I've been waiting for this for a very long time," she said. "I'm relieved it's finally over with."