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ST. CHARLES WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY IN BEATING OF TODDLER IN HOTEL ROOM IN OCTOBER 2010 CO-DEFENDANT ALREADY SERVING 15-YEAR PRISON TERM

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A former St. Charles woman has pleaded guilty for failing to protect her toddler daughter while her boyfriend severely beat the child in 2010 in a St. Charles hotel room.

Cathleen A. Koch, 30 (d.o.b. 1-13-1982), LKA of the 1500 block of East Main Street, St. Charles, today pleaded guilty to one count of aggravated domestic battery, a Class 2 felony, five counts of obstructing justice, each a Class 4 felony, and seven counts of child endangerment, each a Class A misdemeanor. In addition, Koch agreed that the actions that caused injury to her daughter were exceptionally brutal or heinous in nature and indicative of wanton cruelty.

Circuit Judge Timothy Q. Sheldon accepted the plea and set Koch's next court appearance for 1:15 p.m. Sept. 20, 2012, for sentencing. Koch faces a sentence of probation or between 3 and 14 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections. Koch is eligible for an extended term because the crime was committed in a matter that was exceptionally brutal or heinous in nature and indicative of wanton cruelty.

The morning of Oct. 27, 2010, in a hotel room in the 1500 block of East Main Street, St. Charles, co-defendant James C. Cooper, 29 (d.o.b. 4-10-1983), most recently of the 1500 block of East Main Street, St. Charles, punched the 23-month-old girl 10 times and slammed her face first into a bed. The child immediately was unresponsive, not breathing and bleeding from her mouth. As a result of the battery, the girl suffered severe and permanent brain injuries and broken bones. Koch was present in the room during the beating but failed to stop Cooper's actions. Further, Koch was not injured in the incident.

Koch was charged based on an allegation that she is legally responsible for the abusive acts of Cooper, her boyfriend. Illinois Appellate courts have held that a person aids another person in the commission of an offense where she has an affirmative duty to act to protect her child but chooses not to act.

After she called 911 to report the girl's injuries, Koch repeatedly lied to police about the cause of the child's injuries and Cooper's whereabouts, and provided other misleading and inaccurate information about Cooper.

On March 30, 2012, Cooper agreed with the Kane County State's Attorney to a sentence of 15 years in IDOC in exchange for a guilty plea to one count of aggravated battery to a child, a Class X felony.

"We are pleased that Ms. Koch has accepted responsibility for her failure to protect her daughter from a violent man," Kane County State's Attorney Joe McMahon said. "This open plea will allow us to present information to the judge at her sentencing hearing that we think is important and that will allow him to issue a fair sentence.

"Our office remains steadfast in its commitment to justice for this small child. The person who had the legal responsibility to protect her was the one who exposed her to violence. The defendant effectively abandoned her daughter when the girl should have been able to trust that her mother would protect her.

"Thanks to the St. Charles Police Department for its thorough investigation of this case, and to Kane County Assistant State's Attorney Joseph Cullen and Debra Bree, who prosecuted this case."

Koch remains free on \$10,000 bond.