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Howell sentence to 25 years for Murder 2nd & Abuse of Child

St. Charles County, Missouri- The Office of Prosecuting Attorney Tim Lohmar announces that Jessica Lynn Howell, 26, of O'Fallon pled guilty on January 9, 2015, to Abuse of a Child and Felony Murder in the 2nd Degree for offenses that led to the death of her four-month old daughter. Howell's daughter was sexually assaulted and strangled on December 3, 2012 in St. Charles; she later died of her injuries. Howell's boyfriend is charged with Murder in the 1st Degree, Abuse of a Child and Forcible Sodomy in connection with the child's death.

Howell pled guilty to Abuse of a Child for knowingly placing her child in a situation where she could be the victim of abuse. Specifically, Howell sent text messages to her boyfriend suggesting a willingness to allow him to engage in sexual activity with her daughter, knowing that he had previously committed another sexual offense involving different child.

Howell also pled guilty to Felony Murder in the Second Degree for suggesting the aforementioned sexual abuse that led, months later, to the death of the child. Felony Murder in the 2nd Degree holds a person accountable for a homicide if such person commits any felony, the perpetration of which leads ultimately, even if unintentionally, to the death of another.

Abuse of a Child, as charged in this case, is punishable by ten to thirty years imprisonment or life imprisonment with eligibility for parole after fifteen years of any sentence has been served. Felony Murder in the 2nd degree is punishable by ten to thirty years imprisonment or life imprisonment with eligibility for parole after eighty-five percent of any sentence has been served. Howell pled guilty pursuant to the State's recommendation of twenty-five years in the Missouri Department of Corrections. She must serve eighty-five percent of that sentence before she may be eligible for parole. Under Missouri law, Howell will also be required to register as a sex offender for the remainder of her natural life.

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