



NEWS RELEASE

April 11, 2013
Contact: Sue Lindsay
Public Information
303-835-5639

Man Sentenced to 42 Years in Beating Death of 21-Month-Old Boy

Donald Jean Scarlett (DOB 10/05/79) was sentenced to 42 years in prison Thursday in Adams County District Court in the brutal beating death of his girlfriend's 21-month-old son.

Michael Harris (DOB 04/14/09) died February 2, 2011 of catastrophic brain, spinal and abdominal injuries.

Scarlett was convicted February 12, 2013 of criminally negligent child abuse resulting in death (F3) and reckless manslaughter (F4). He had been charged with first-degree murder of a child by a person in a position of trust (F1).

Adams County District Judge Chris Melonakis sentenced Scarlett to 42 years in prison for child abuse resulting in death. He also imposed a six-year prison sentence on the manslaughter charge, but ordered that this be concurrent with the 42-year sentence.

The toddler's mother, Rose Anna Key (05/22/87), was sentenced on February 13, 2013 to 16 years in prison after pleading guilty to criminally negligent child abuse resulting in death.

Brighton police officers found Michael unresponsive and without a pulse when they responded to a 911 call from Scarlett, who was with the boy at his apartment while Key was at work.

The 21-month-old toddler was rushed to Platte Valley Medical Center in Brighton and then to Children's Hospital in Aurora where doctors concluded that Michael's injuries were so severe that they were inoperable.

Scarlett was the sole caregiver of the child during the five hour time period prior to the 911 call.

"We are proud of our team of prosecutors and investigators that handled this very difficult case," said Assistant District Attorney Jess Redman. "The catastrophic injuries suffered by Michael are among the most violent and severe that we have ever seen in these cases. Unfortunately our system was unable to protect this child before his death, but we are gratified that the jury who heard the evidence delivered justice to him in this case."

###