IOL - Parents guilty of assaulting baby

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A man and woman were found guilty by the Johannesburg Regional Court on Monday of assaulting their baby in 2003, Women and Men Against Child Abuse said.

“We are incredibly disappointed that they were not charged with attempted murder,” said executive director Kevin Barbeau.

Bradley Connor and Malinda Marshall, now both aged 26, were ordered to return to the court for sentencing on January 27.

They were found guilty of assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm. Both are out on bail.

Their child, Michael, who was three months old at the time of the assaults, died a blind quadriplegic at Avril Elizabeth Home on October 16.

“Sitting in court listening to everything that happened to this little boy was heartbreaking,” said Barbeau.

A medical professional said he appeared to have been throttled, causing haemorrhaging and blindness.

In October 2003, Michael was admitted to hospital with injuries which raised concern that he had been abused. A social worker looked into the case, but recommended that he be returned to his parents.

In November 2003, Michael was again admitted to hospital. He was bruised, blind and brain damaged. His parents – aged 18 at the time – were questioned.

Initially Michael's mother claimed his father had abused him.

Later, she retracted this and claimed she alone was responsible for Michael's injuries.

The baby was placed in the care of the Ikhaya Tini Vorster home, where he remained until 2007.

Marshall was convicted of assaulting the child in July 15 2005, after changing her plea to not guilty.

Connor received a suspended sentence, under a plea bargain in which he admitted to not feeding the baby and to not getting medical treatment for him.

In a new trial, both were charged with attempted murder in October 2009.

Connor applied for a permanent stay of prosecution, on the basis of his previous plea bargain. This was denied.

The attempted murder charge was later commuted to assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm.

Marshall has since married and has three more children, all below the age of eight. – Sapa

Beeld - Baba erg geslaan: 2 skuldig

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Melinda Marshall gister buite die Johannesburgse landdroshof nadat sy daaraan skuldig bevind is dat sy haar baba erg aangerand het.

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Jinine Botha

Die ouers van 'n seun wat verlede maand as 'n blinde kwadrupleeg dood is, is gister daaraan skuldig bevind dat hulle hom as baba erg aangerand het.

Michael Connor was ten tyde van die aanrandings in 2003 tussen drie en vier maande oud.

Streeklanddros Frans Booyens het Melinda Marshall en Bradley Michael Connor (albei 26) in die Johannesburgse streekhof skuldig bevind aan aanranding met die opset om ernstig te beseer, maar vrygespreek op aanklag van poging tot

moord.

Hy het gesê hulle was ongeloofwaardige getuies en het hulself en mekaar telkemale weerspreek.

“Die beskuldigdes het mekaar in die misdaad geïmpliseer, wat hul weergawes uiteindelik onwaar en ongeloofwaardig gemaak het.”

Michael is op 16 Oktober vanjaar in die Avril Elizabeth-tehuis in Johannesburg oorlede.

Hy het in Oktober 2003 beserings gehad wat op fisieke mishandeling gedui het, maar nadat ’n welsynwerker die saak ondersoek het is hy weer in die sorg van sy ouers geplaas.

Nadat hy in November daardie jaar in ’n koma by die destydse Johannesburgse Hospitaal (nou die Charlotte Maxeke-hospitaal) opgeneem is, is hy uit Connor en Marshall se sorg verwyder.

“Dokters het getuig dat hy teen dié tyd ernstige breinskade opgedoen het en 80% blind was,” het Booyens gesê.

Hy het die vier dokters wat getuig het as geloofwaardig bestempel en gesê hy glo hul weergawe dat Michael sy beserings deur fisieke aanranding, en nie deur ongelukke nie, opgedoen het.

Connor het vroeër aangevoer die seuntjie het per ongeluk op hul futon-bed geval nadat hy met hom gespeel het deur hom in die lug te gooi en weer te vang. Marshall, wat Connor eers vir die aanrandings verantwoordelik gehou het en daarna self verantwoordelikheid vir Michael se beserings aanvaar het, is in 2009 saam Connor aangekla nadat sy haar pleit na onskuldig verander het.

Booyens het die twee op aanklag van poging tot moord vrygespreek omdat hy meen die staat kon nie bewys dat hulle bedoel het om hul baba dood te maak nie.

“Albei beskuldigdes moes egter daarvan bewus gewees het dat baba Michael broos en weerloos teen hul aanrandings was.”

Die twee se borgtog is tot in Januarie verleng wanneer die vonnisverrigtinge sal begin.

Nadat die hof verdaag het, het lede van die organisasie Women and Men Against Child Abuse vir Connor in die hofgebou agtervolg en geskreeu hy is ’n kindermishandelaar. Hy het polisielede by die hof daaroor genader.

Lede van die organisasie het hom egter die straat ingejaag, terwyl Marshall amper ongesiens by die hof uitgeglip het.

Mnr. Kevin Barbeau, besturende direkteur van die organisasie, het gesê hulle was teleurgesteld omdat die ouers nie ook aan poging tot moord skuldig bevind is nie.

Bradley Michael Connor, wat gister daaraan skuldig bevind is dat hy sy baba erg aangerand het, word deur lede van die organisasie Women and Men Against Child Abuse buite die hof gevolg.
Foto's: NELIUS RADEMAN

The Citizen - Parents of dead baby Connor guilty of assault

The parents of seven-year-old Michael Connor were yesterday found guilty of assault which resulted in his death by the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court.

21 November 2011 | AVASHNEE MOODLEY

JOHANNESBURG - The parents of seven-year-old Michael Connor were yesterday found guilty of assault which resulted in his death by the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court.

Michael died in October this year after suffering for seven years from injuries sustained at the hands of his abusive parents.

In 2003, at three-months-old, he was admitted to hospital with a bruised and swollen left eye. A month later, on November 11, the four-month-old was re-admitted to the Johannesburg General Hospital. He was permanently blind, with fresh bruises on his face and irreversible brain damage.

His mother, who was 18 at the time, pleaded guilty to assaulting her baby and while she was on remand awaiting sentence, the father pleaded guilty in a plea-bargain deal to the offence of not feeding Michael or taking him to hospital for medical treatment. For this he received a two-year suspended prison sentence.

The mother then changed her plea to not guilty and when the State tried to recharge Connor he argued he had already been convicted and couldn't be tried twice.

Yesterday, after a prolonged trial, they were acquitted of murder charges as the state could not prove they intended to murder their baby.

Advocacy groups protesting outside the court were outraged at the magistrate’s decision to acquit Marshall and Connor of murder.

Kevin Barbeau, executive director of Women And Men Against Child Abuse, said they wanted the parents convicted of murder. “We are disgusted and shocked at the decision, to know that children out there are suffering and justice is not being served,” he said.

Barbeau said it was unacceptable that the mother could now raise three more children after getting married. “How can she be allowed to have children and take care of them,” he said.

Meanwhile, State Prosecutor in the case Carina Coetzee, who intervened personally in the proceedings said she was happy with the court’s judgment. “It was a fair decision. As the state we conceded we could not prove they intended to commit murder,” she said.

– *avashneem@citizen.co.za*

News 24 - Paartjie skuldig van aanranding ná baba se dood

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Johannesburg – ‘n Man en vrou is in die Johannesburg-streekhof skuldig bevind op aanklagte dat hulle op verskeie geleenthede hul baba in 2003 aangerand het.

“Ons is diep teleurgesteld dat hulle nie op 'n aanklag van poging tot moord skuldig bevind is nie,” het die uitvorende direkteur van Women and Men Against Child Abuse, Kevin Barbeau, gesê.

Bradley Connor en Malinda Marshall, albei 26-jaar oud, sal op 27 Januarie weer in die hof verskyn om hul vonnis te ontvang.

Beide is van aanranding met die doel om ernstig te beseer skuldig bevind en is op borgtog vrygelaat.

Hulle kind, Michael, was drie-jaar-oud toe die aanrandings plaasgevind het.

Hy is 16 Oktober by die Avril Elizabeth Tehuis oorlede.

Vanweë die herhaalde aanrandings, was Michael blind en ‘n kwadrupleeg.

“Dit was hartverskeurend om in die hof te hoor wat dié seuntjie alles moes deurmaak,” het Barbeau gesê.

‘n Mediese deskundige het tydens die hofsaak getuig dat Michael waarskynlik gewurg is, wat tot bloeding op die brein en blindheid gelei het.

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Couple guilty of assaulting baby

A MAN and woman were found guilty yesterday in the Johannesburg Regional Court of assaulting their baby in 2003.

"We are incredibly disappointed that they were not charged with attempted murder," said the executive director of Women and Men Against Child Abuse, Kevin Barbeau.

Bradley Connor and Malinda Marshall, both 26, will be sentenced on January 27. - Sapa