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June 6, 2010

Maryland Man Convicted in Beating Death of Toddler

Maryland criminal lawyers often see clients charged with crimes ranging from shoplifting to drug possession, conspiracy, attempted murder or murder. Cases involving injuries or deaths to children, whether inflicted by a stranger or another adult who has contact with a child, evoke strong public emotions and can be among the most complex and difficult cases to try. One such case concluded this week in Maryland with the conviction of a man accused in the tragic beating death of three-year-old Charles "Mike Mike" Bradley.

A Maryland criminal attorney negotiated a deal with prosecutors that allowed Andre Clay Russell Jr., 29, to plead guilty to one count of child abuse resulting in death and another count of 1st degree child abuse in exchange for the prosecutors dropping 3 related charges including 1st degree murder. Russell, who was raising the child but was not Bradley's biological father, was charged following the child's death on August 12th of last year. Assistant State's Attorney Kathleen Rogers commented on the case, saying:

"This is the worst case involving physical abuse I have seen in 24 years."

Police first became aware of the abuse allegations on August 7th, when they responded to a 911 call regarding an unconscious child in the basement of a townhouse in Severn. The child, Charles Bradley, was airlifted to Johns Hopkins Medical Center. He was critically injured for five days before he succumbed to his injuries. A medical expert in the case said that it appeared that Bradley had been "run over by a car," and that the child suffered "pancreatic and liver damage, multiple rib fractures, and numerous bruises on his chest, buttocks and legs, as well as intracranial bleeding."

An investigation into the boy's death revealed what appeared to be a lengthy history of abuse, with several witnesses reporting having seen Russell beating Bradley, or indicating that the child was spotted with severe injuries consistent with regular physical abuse. Russell had been regularly caring for Bradley, the child of his girlfriend Orielle Baker, while she was hospitalized for an undisclosed illness. Neither Baker nor the several witnesses came forward with the information regarding the alleged abuse until after Bradley's death.

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Media reports indicate that Russell has a long rap sheet dating back to 1997, and that he is on the Maryland Sex Offender Registry, listed as a child sex offender. It is unclear whether he violated any probation terms in acting as the child's caregiver in the first place. Russell's [Maryland criminal attorney](#) must prepare for sentencing on August 2nd, where the accused faces 55 years in prison. Prosecutors have stated that they will seek the maximum penalty in the case, while Russell's attorney will present an argument for why a more lenient sentence is appropriate.