

Bend woman gets 15 years in niece's death

by Cheryl McDermott

A 25-year old Bend woman pleaded guilty Thursday to manslaughter charges in connection with the shaking death of her 14-month-old niece in May of last year. Katherine Ann Seifert, 26, was sentenced to 15 years in prison by Deschutes County Circuit Judge Michael Sullivan.

Katherine Ann Seifert - DCJ photo Seifert was arrested May 24, 2006 after police were called to the 400 block of Thurston Ave. about 11:45 a.m. after receiving a report of a child not breathing. Officers who arrived on the scene began CPR on the child and transported her to St. Charles Medical Center-Bend, where she was later pronounced dead.

Seifert allegedly told police she shook the toddler and threw her to the floor, according to a prosecutor at Seifert's first court appearance, and admitted the same in Thursday's sentencing. "Today I admit to the death of Christina," she said, tearfully apologetic.

According to the state Medical Examiner's Office in Portland an autopsy conducted the following day

determined that Christina Seifert died due to a "closed head trauma."

“This baby was shaken” shaking of a baby causes closed head injuries,” District attorney Mike Dugan said in an earlier interview.

Without the plea agreement, Seifert would have faced 25 years to life if she had been found guilty of felony murder during a trial. The minimum sentence for first-degree manslaughter is ten years.

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