



OFFICE OF THE VANDERBURGH COUNTY PROSECUTOR

**DIANA L. MOERS**

ADMINISTRATION BLDG. - ROOM 108  
1 NW MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BLVD  
EVANSVILLE, IN 47708  
(812) 435-5150 | prosecutorinfo@vanderburghgov.org

**\*\*\*MEDIA ALERT\*\*\***

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*CONTACT: Winston Lin*  
*Phone: 219-242-2417*

## **JURY FINDS DEFENDANT GUILTY AS CHARGED IN INFANT CO-SLEEPING DEATH CASE**

Evansville, IN – Prosecutor Diana Moers announces that on July 31, 2024, a jury found Taylor Alexis Smith guilty as charged for the death of her infant. Smith was charged with Neglect of a Dependent Resulting in Death, a Level 1 Felony; Possession of Methamphetamine, a Level 6 Felony; Unlawful Possession of Syringe, a Level 6 Felony; and Possession of Paraphernalia; a Class C Misdemeanor. The Honorable Magistrate Judge Celia M. Pauli of the Vanderburgh County Circuit Court presided.

On June 8, 2022, Officers were dispatched to 27 W. Oregon Street in reference to an unresponsive infant. The American Medical Response and Evansville Fire Department made several attempts to resuscitate the infant, Wade Wilson, but the 13-day-old baby was declared deceased on-scene. The home was extremely unsanitary, lacking running water and appropriate sleeping space for the infant. Upon receiving a warrant, a search of the home uncovered the presence of methamphetamine and syringes.

The Defendant, Taylor Alexis Smith, appeared to be under the influence during her interaction with the responding Officers and later disclosed recent methamphetamine use. Smith admitted to sleeping with her baby and stated she woke up with the infant underneath her and unresponsive.

Infant Wade Wilson was born on May 27, 2024, and tested positive on drug screens for methamphetamine at birth. The Department of Child Services and Vanderburgh County Juvenile Court ordered the Defendant, Taylor Smith, not to have contact with her son. Despite this order, Smith continued to have contact with Wade Wilson and actively use methamphetamine. Smith was consistently warned against the risks of her drug use to her newborn child's life and was also warned of the dangers of co-sleeping with her child. Despite the persistent warnings, the Defendant continued to engage in these behaviors.

The state presented testimony from the American Medical Response, Indiana State Police, Deaconess, and Department of Child Services, as well as photographs of the home showing the unsanitary and unsafe conditions, an abundance of methamphetamine and paraphernalia found at the scene, and police body camera footage. At the conclusion of the 3-day trial, the jury found Taylor Alexis Smith guilty as charged.

Prosecutor Moers stated: “The death of an infant shakes us all. This Defendant is an addict who refused to follow strict no contact orders for her son—who tested positive for drugs the day he was born. The Defendant gaining access to her son and co-sleeping with him while high led to the child’s death. We will never forget this innocent baby and will pray that his memory encourages others to seek help and assist those in need.”

Moers went on to state: “We should never have to prosecute another one of these cases. If you or someone you know are an addict and in need of help, you must reach out. The life of an innocent child could have been saved in this case. Our community has a plethora of resources for those struggling with addiction to get the assistance they need—to find a comprehensive list you can start by googling the Indiana Substance Abuse Council or talk with your local hospital, law enforcement, shelter, or other medical facility.”

Prosecutor Moers thanks Detective Karin Montgomery and Officer John Pieszchalski for their response and thorough investigation in this case, the American Medical Response and Evansville Fire Department for their efforts to save the infant and daily efforts to serve citizens of Vanderburgh County, the Department of Child Services, Deaconess Hospital, and the Indiana State Police for their efforts in this case. Prosecutor Moers extends a special thank you to her Deputy Ian Blair whose specialization in prosecuting child abuse and neglect cases led to success in this case, and all her office staff including Winston Lin, Kiersten Butler, Morgan Richardville, Tony Carden, and Jessica Pollock who assisted in this case to bring justice to Vanderburgh County for the reckless death of a baby.

Sentencing is scheduled for August 22, 2024, in front of the Honorable Magistrate Judge Celia M. Pauli of the Vanderburgh County Circuit Court. The Defendant could face up to 40 years.

The infant’s father, Timothy Allen Wilson, is also charged with a series of crimes in connection with this case and is awaiting trial in October.

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