

Chester County District Attorney's Office

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PRESS RELEASE

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November 24, 2020

Mom's Boyfriend Beats 9-Year Old to Unconsciousness in Westtown Township

The Chester County District Attorney's Office and the Westtown-East Goshen Regional Police Department charged 34-year old Dimitrios Moscharis, of West Chester, PA, with Attempted Homicide, Strangulation, Aggravated Assault, Possessing an Instrument of Crime, Endangering the Welfare of a Child, False Imprisonment, and related charges after finding his girlfriend's 9-year old daughter beaten severely and unconscious. She is currently in critical condition at Nemours/A.I. DuPont Hospital with injuries to her lungs, extensive bruising throughout her body, and likely brain damage due to oxygen deprivation for an extended period. All her injuries are consistent with trauma. The defendant is being held without bail at Chester County Prison.

Chester County District Attorney Deb Ryan said, "What this child endured is unconscionable. The defendant's depravity is beyond words and comprehension. It is the kind of criminal action that is devastating to our community and parents alike. A seasoned child abuse detective said that the child's bruising all over her body was the worst he's ever seen in his career. My office vows to seek full justice for the victim child with maximum punishment for the defendant."

Dr. Brenda Bernot, Chief of Police at Westtown-East Goshen Regional Police Department, stated, "Children are the most vulnerable members of our society, and it is heartbreaking and unimaginable that anyone could abuse a child in such a horrific manner. The Westtown-East Goshen Regional Police Department is committed to pursuing every possible lead to ensure that those responsible for this horrific crime are brought to justice."

The allegations in the complaint are the following¹:

In the early hours of November 23, 2020, Westtown-East Goshen police responded to a 911 call of an unconscious 9-year old child at a Westtown Township home. The child's mother, Julianne Lewis, reported that while she was driving for Lyft in Northeast Philadelphia, she received a text from the defendant, her boyfriend, to come home immediately. The child had been in the defendant's care. When Lewis arrived home – which was in disarray, indicating a struggle – she found her daughter unconscious, wet, and fully clothed in the bathtub. She and the defendant pulled her from the bathtub to perform CPR after Lewis called 911.

Police found the child unresponsive on the bathroom floor. When EMS removed her clothes to perform life-saving measures, they found extensive bruising all over her body that appeared both old and new.

The child was taken to Nemours/A.I. DuPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, DE. Doctors at DuPont said the victim child suffered a “near fatality,” meaning she suffered life-threatening injuries, including to her lungs. Tests showed that she likely suffered brain damage because she was deprived of oxygen for a significant time, indicating strangulation or suffocation.

The child's body had bruising patterns consistent with objects police found near the bathroom, including a curtain rod, hanger, and other implements.

Lewis later told police that she and the defendant had been dating for about two months. When the defendant saw Lewis struggling to control her daughter, she said he told her the child needed to be disciplined. After that, whenever the child acted out or didn't listen, Lewis allowed the defendant to hit her with a curtain rod or a baton used to open and close window blinds. If the discipline became excessive, Lewis said she told the defendant to stop. Additionally, the defendant would force the child to walk up and down the stairs with her arms outstretched for hours at a time and lock her in the closet for extended periods.

¹ A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Investigators learned that the defendant failed to call 911 for help despite knowing the child had stopped breathing for at least 10-15 minutes. When Lewis arrived home and finally called 911, the defendant told her to lie to the police and state that the child's biological father injured the child.

"During the pandemic, we have seen a notable decrease in child abuse reports. We do not believe this is a result of fewer child abuse cases but of less oversight. The highest number of ChildLine reports overwhelmingly come from our educators on the frontlines protecting our children every day. We implore everyone to stay vigilant and check in on our most vulnerable population. They rely on us to keep them safe." Ryan stated.

A preliminary hearing is scheduled on November 30, 2020, at 9:30 a.m. before Magisterial District Judge Martin Goch, 15-2-03. This case is assigned to Deputy District Attorney Erin O'Brien.

Anyone with information is urged to call Chester County Detectives at 610-344-6866 or Westtown-East Goshen Detective Russel Weaverling at 610-692-9600.

If you suspect child abuse contact ChildLine at 800-932-0313.

Approved for release by Deborah Ryan, District Attorney