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News

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Two-month-old child
**Sheriff's detectives arrest father
in connection with baby's death**

PORT ORCHARD, Wash. -- In an on-going investigation into the death of a two-month-old male infant, Kitsap County Sheriff's detectives have arrested the biological father in connection with the child's demise.

The father, age 32, was arrested at 10:30 a.m. today at his apartment in Keyport. He was booked into the Kitsap County Jail on suspicion of murder, 2nd degree (DV). Bail has been set initially at \$1 million.

Tuesday evening, Dec. 3, sheriff's detectives responded to Mary Bridge Children's Hospital, Tacoma, at the request of hospital social workers, due to the initial report of the injury the child sustained - - a skull fracture. The child's parents had first taken the baby to Harrison Medical Center, Silverdale, where he was diagnosed with a decompressed skull fracture with bleeding occurring between the brain and the skull. The child was then airlifted to Tacoma.

Further examinations and tests by Mary Bridge medical staff revealed that the child had suffered significant damage to his brain tissue together with cerebral ischemia (strokes).

During an interview with detectives the father stated that around 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, as he was moving an infant car seat sitting on their dining room table with the baby strapped inside, his left hand struck the top of a dining room chair. The momentum of the movement, coupled with his hand hitting the chair, caused him to lose control of the car seat so that it fell to the floor, landing face down. The floor is carpeted with a pad underneath.

Note: The child's mother was away from the residence, at work, and wasn't present when this incident reportedly occurred.

Additional tests at Mary Bridge provided updated medical details that the child had several rib fractures, indicating possible non-accidental trauma. There also was reported to be bruising in the baby's left ear (opposite side to the head fracture), bruising to the left hand and wrist, an abrasion under the right eye and bruising beginning to appear on the infant's abdomen. Laboratory tests indicated the baby's liver enzymes were elevated, suggesting non-accidental trauma.

The child was removed from life support and pronounced deceased at 3:45 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 4. The lead investigator noted that the light abrasions on the infant, seen the evening before, had developed into large bruising on the baby's face, head, ear, arms, hands, stomach and legs.

The county's forensic pathologist today performed an autopsy on the child. The Kitsap County Coroner listed the cause of death as severe multiple blunt force injuries to the head and multiple recent rib fractures. The manner of death is homicide.

The baby sustained life threatening injuries while in the sole care of his father. The father provided an account of how the injuries occurred, however that account doesn't coincide with the nature of the injuries. Medical authorities determined that the infant did not receive these fatal injuries from having fallen to a carpeted / padded floor while strapped into a padded car seat.

"We are extremely saddened by the brutal pain and suffering this baby endured during the last few hours of his life," said Lt. Jon VanGesen of the Sheriff's Investigations and Support Services Division. "The traumatic injuries to the infant were extensive and shocking, even to our most senior criminal investigators."

The suspect is expected to make an initial appearance in Kitsap County Superior Court on Monday, Dec. 9, at 3 p.m.

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