

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Notice of Conviction

Kennesaw Couple Found Guilty of Child Abuse of 4-Month-Old Son
State vs. Derrick Lenard Bessix and Allison Catherine Keener

August 26, 2025 – District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway announces that a Cherokee County jury has found Derrick Lenard Bessix, 30, and Allison Catherine Keener, 27, both of Kennesaw, guilty of committing acts that caused multiple leg fractures in their infant son.

The guilty verdict was reached on August 22, following a five-day trial and approximately three hours of jury deliberation.

While the State argued Bessix intentionally caused the injuries, the jury instead found that the injuries were inflicted with criminal negligence.

Bessix was found guilty of cruelty to children in the second degree and contributing to the dependency of a minor. Keener was found guilty of contributing to the dependency of a minor, for failing to provide proper parental care which resulted in the child needing protection from the court.

The Cherokee Sheriff's Office began investigating this case on September 15, 2020, after a pediatrician observed signs of child abuse during the baby's 4-month checkup.

The baby was taken to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (CHOA) for evaluation to assess the extent and nature of his injuries. The examination revealed that he had multiple fractures in his ribs and legs, with the leg fractures having occurred more recently.

During the trial, the State presented evidence that Bessix caused the leg fracture, and that both Keener and Bessix failed to ensure the well-being of their child. The couple and their baby lived in a Hickory Flat home at the time.

A total of 13 witnesses testified for the State, including several pediatricians, a CHOA child abuse pediatrician, a representative from the Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS), law enforcement, witnesses, and family members.

The Defense called both defendants to the stand to testify, as well as three character witnesses.

Sentencing was set for September 4.

The case was investigated by the Cherokee Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Deputy Chief Assistant District Attorney Rachel Hines, of the Special Victims Unit, with assistance from Assistant District Attorney Pete Lamb, Office of the District Attorney, Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit.

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The Office of the District Attorney for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit is committed to seeking justice, acting with integrity, and collaborating with partner agencies in the criminal justice system in order to protect the citizens of Cherokee County and the State of Georgia.

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