

Murder Trial Set To Begin For Man Accused Of Throwing Baby From Bridge

By Shawn R. Beals



Tony Moreno, accused of throwing his 7-month-old son from the Arrigoni Bridge in 2015, appears in Middletown Superior Court on Wednesday morning for an administrative hearing ahead of a trial in his case. Jury selection is scheduled to begin next week. At right is Moreno's attorney Norm Pattis and at left is judicial marshal Sal Didato.

Testimony is scheduled to begin next month in the murder trial of Tony Moreno, accused of throwing his 7-month-old son from the Arrigoni Bridge in July 2015.

Moreno's attorney, Norman A. Pattis, said Wednesday at a pre-trial hearing in Superior Court that he expects Moreno to testify during the trial and that Moreno

will not deny he was responsible for Aaden Moreno's death.

"There will be no argument by the defense in this case that Mr. Moreno was not responsible for causing his son's death," Pattis said.

Pattis said he will argue at trial for the jury to consider lesser charges for Moreno, including

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first-degree manslaughter, second-degree manslaughter and criminally negligent homicide. Pattis also said Moreno, 23, will not be using an insanity or emotional disturbance defense.

The preview of the trial came during a motion Pattis made in front of Judge Elpedio N. Vitale in which Pattis attempted to

admit a letter from Moreno that served as a counter offer to a proposed plea bargain made by Middlesex State's Attorney Peter A. McShane.

The state made a plea offer to Moreno earlier this year, which was rejected, and Moreno made the counter offer, which the state rejected. Details of both offers were not discussed publicly Wednesday.

Pattis said his request was an unusual bid to get the court to admit the letter as evidence as a "judicial admission" because it would show that Moreno accepts criminal responsibility for Aaden's death.

Vitale denied the motion. He said the letter goes beyond statements of fact and that the state would not have the opportunity for cross examination if the letter was admitted as factual evidence.

Jury selection in Moreno's case is anticipated to begin Tuesday, with a pool of 80 to 100 prospective jurors expected on that day. Vitale said Wednesday he expects to prepare the jury to begin hearing evidence in the trial by Feb. 8.

Moreno, wearing an orange prison jumpsuit, answered questions posed to him by the judge on Wednesday. The courtroom gallery was empty.

Police said Moreno threw his baby off the Arrigoni Bridge into the Connecticut River before

jumping over the railing on July 5, 2015. The incident led to a grim two-day search for the baby's body, which was found in the river about a mile north of the East Haddam Swing Bridge.

Moreno was pulled from the river shortly after jumping in, but was badly injured and spent several days in the hospital. Police in an arrest warrant affidavit said Moreno, in an interview with detectives from his hospital bed, confessed to throwing Aaden off the bridge.

Court documents obtained in the days following the incident detail a difficult relationship between Moreno and Adrienne Oyola, the baby's mother. Oyola had applied for a restraining order just a few weeks earlier, asking the court to keep Moreno away because she feared for her safety and for her child.

In the application for the restraining order, Oyola said Moreno verbally abused, threatened and pushed her. A temporary restraining order was in place until a judge denied the restraining order request at a hearing in June 2015, encouraging the two to form a custody agreement and sort out their relationship.

Moreno is charged with murder and risk of injury to a child. He is being held on \$2 million bond at MacDougall-Walker Correctional Institution in Suffield.

If convicted of both charges at trial, Moreno could face a maximum of 70 years in prison.

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