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CLERK OF DISTRICT COURT

2021 JAN 19 AM 9:58

Attorneys for the State

FILED
BY 

MONTANA EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT, CASCADE COUNTY

STATE OF MONTANA,

Plaintiff,

vs.

TERI GRACE CHASE,

Defendant.

No. **ADC - 21 - 041**

**MOTION FOR LEAVE TO
FILE INFORMATION DIRECT
AND AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT**

STATE OF MONTANA)

: ss.

County of Cascade)

The undersigned County Attorney of Cascade County, Montana, being first duly sworn, moves the Court for leave to File an Information charging the above-named defendant with:

COUNT I: CRIMINAL ENDANGERMENT, a Felony, in violation of M.C.A. § 45-5-207.

OR, IN THE ALTERNATIVE

COUNT I: NEGLIGENT ENDANGERMENT, a Misdemeanor, in violation of M.C.A. § 45-5-208.

Affiant has reviewed reports submitted by the Great Falls Police Department. These reports pertain to the events hereinafter described, and on the basis of the same, Affiant makes the allegations hereinafter set forth:

On 9/25/2020, at 11:47 a.m., police were dispatched to 2610 Upper River Road. When police arrived, medics were performing life saving measures on D.J. an approximately 3-month-old infant. At the residence police spoke with the defendant, Teri Chase. Chase told police that she was operating a daycare. She stated that she had fed D.J. During the feeding D.J. fell asleep. Chase left D.J. in the kitchen and went to check on the other children. When she returned D.J. was blue and had formula in his mouth. Chase picked up D.J. and she was not breathing. She then called 911. D.J. would later die of cardiac arrest due to lack of oxygen caused by this event.

After D.J. was taken to the ER police waited for the other children at the daycare to be picked up. Police noted a total of fifteen children under the age of five were being housed at the daycare. Chase had no employees present and appeared the only adult present. Police also spoke to D.J.'s parents. They noted that D.J. did at time regurgitate his formula but otherwise had no medical issues. They also noted that Chase had been watching D.J. for a couple of weeks. D.J. parents were surprised to learn the number of children at the daycare. They also noted to police that Chase rarely allowed them inside the home and normally met them at the door for pickup and drop off.

Police attempted to interview the parents of the children at the daycare on the 25th. Police spoke with Jennifer Swan. She told police she had been dropping her child at the daycare since June. Chase had told her that she (Chase) was running a drop-off daycare with some permanent spots and some drop off spots. Swan noted that she was also not allowed into the home during drop offs and pickups. She noted that her child often had a loaded diaper at pickup.

Police spoke to Kayla McKinley. Her child had been attending Chase's daycare for about a year and a half. McKinley noted that her child seemed to like to attend the daycare and that Chase asked her to text when she was ready for pick up and Chase would bring the child outside.

Police spoke to Bethany Schauman. She noted that she dropped her children off at the daycare about once a week. Schauman said Chase told her she was licensed. She also noted that Chase would meet her at the door for drop off and pick up.

Police spoke to Nakisha Cook. She told police that she normally took her children to Chase's daycare on Thursdays and Fridays. She noted that she had been inside the daycare and had seen about 15 kids there on September 15th, Chase had told her she (Chase) was working by herself.

Police interviewed Travis and Julie Green-Sutphin. They told police that their child had been attending the daycare for between one and two years. They noted that Chase would meet them at the door to pick-up or drop off their child.

Police interviewed Ciara Nagy and Dylan Seright. They said their children had been attending the daycare for over a year. They recalled that Chase had said she was licensed and insured. Chase had mentioned to them that she would be watching eight children.

Police interviewed Sierra and Haley Neisinger. They noted their children had been attending the daycare regularly since July 2019.

Police spoke to Katrina Palmer. She said she had been taking her child to the daycare 3 days a week. Palmer noted Chase met her at the door for pickup and drop off.

Police spoke to Cody Keller. His child had been attending the daycare since 2016. He noted he only picked up or dropped off the child outside.

Police were able to obtain passed DPHHS records on Chase's previously licensed daycare and had attended the required trainings. It was noted Chase had twice received complaints for having more children than allowed by regulations. The last complaint was in 2018. Chase told the worker at that time that she intended to close her daycare. Shortly, after this interaction Chase claimed to have closed her daycare and her licensing lapsed.

Police interviewed Chase. She told police she "dropped" her license so she could operate a "drop in" daycare. She told police that she watches about 7 or 8 children on a slow day and up to 15 on a busy day. She also said that 3 or 4 children were watched on a "full time" basis.

By having fifteen children under the age of five in her daycare the defendant maintained an environment where there was a substantial risk that one of the children in her care could suffer a serious injury or death.

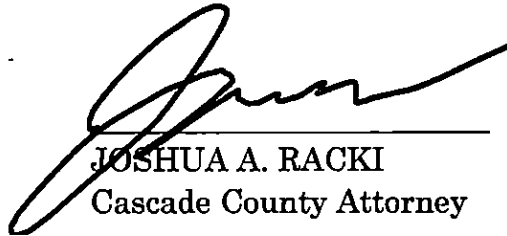
Given the foregoing, the undersigned has probable cause to believe that the Defendant has engaged in activity constituting the offenses of:

COUNT I: CRIMINAL ENDANGERMENT, a Felony, in violation of M.C.A. § 45-5-207.

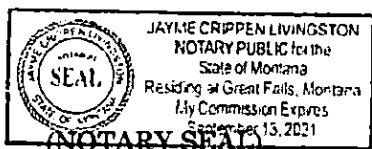
OR, IN THE ALTERNATIVE

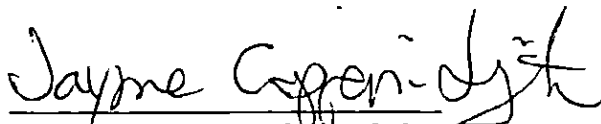
COUNT I: NEGLIGENT ENDANGERMENT, a Misdemeanor, in violation of M.C.A. § 45-5-208.

DATED 16 January 2021.


JOSHUA A. RACKI
Cascade County Attorney

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before me on the 16th day of January, 2021.




Notary Public for the State of Montana,
Residing at Great Falls, Cascade County,
Montana.

My commission expires

2-13-21

cc: County Attorney/Joshua A. Racki
Defense Counsel/Public Defender's Office
Defendant – c/o Counsel
GFPD/
CCSO/warrants