

Local

Slain D.C. woman sought court's protection from suspect

By **Paul Duggan** September 14, 2011

Alecia Wheeler filed at least two court complaints against Claude Kinney, father of three of her children. Describing a pattern of recent domestic assaults, she said Kinney slapped her, punched her, kicked her and threatened her with worse.

One night, while they were together in Northeast Washington, Kinney “jumped out of bed, ran into the kitchen, then came back and pulled a knife out,” Wheeler said in a complaint. She said Kinney, 48, “got in [her] face” with the blade “and told [her] that he should send [her] to hell where she belonged right then.”

Tuesday afternoon, police said, Kinney followed through on his threats, fatally stabbing Wheeler, 42, behind a Northeast Washington recreation center. They said Kinney, who was arrested shortly afterward, confronted Wheeler as she walked with her four children, ages 1 to 9. He allegedly stabbed her repeatedly with the children present.

Kinney has an extensive arrest record dating back more than two decades, but only one minor conviction in the District. He has been charged with first-degree murder while armed in Wheeler's death. Authorities said her children — three of whom, ages 1, 3 and 5, are also Kinney's — have been placed in the city's custody.

The couple had lived together at various addresses in recent months, court records show.

On Aug. 12, Wheeler asked D.C. Superior Court for a year-long protective order that would have made it illegal for Kinney to come near her.

In her petition, she said Kinney told her “that he wanted to take [her] from this world” and that “he would slice [her] throat and no one would know.” He threatened her with a knife, she said, and beat her several times. Once, after slapping her, Kinney told her that she “needed to listen to him,” Wheeler alleged.

The court immediately granted her a two-week temporary protective order. But at an Aug. 29 hearing, Judge Stuart G. Nash declined to issue a year-long protective order, court records show. Wheeler and Kinney appeared at the hearing without attorneys.

Wheeler returned to Superior Court this week, filing a request for a protective order Monday. She got another two-week order.

Citing an incident that allegedly occurred last week, Wheeler’s court petition says Kinney “hit the petitioner’s face with his face in an attempt to kiss her. The petitioner did not want him to kiss her and told him to leave her alone, but he wouldn’t. The petitioner was able to get away by hitting him with a brick.”

A day after filing the petition, police said, Wheeler was headed home with her children about 3 p.m., walking in an alley behind the Joseph H. Cole Recreation Center in the 1200 block of Neal Street NE, when Kinney fatally stabbed her.

Court records show Kinney has been arrested at least 17 times in the District since the mid-1980s, mainly on charges involving drug dealing and assault, sometimes with weapons. But the only case that stuck was a misdemeanor drug possession charge in 1985, to which he pleaded guilty, records show.

