

# Victim was violent, accused killer's lawyer claims

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**MILFORD** — The lawyer for a West Haven woman accused of fatally stabbing her live-in boyfriend wants the state to turn over the victim's medical records, claiming he suffered from a traumatic brain injury that caused him to act in violent ways.

The motion filed on behalf of Charissa Willette in Superior Court in Milford claims the information in the medical records is pertinent to Willette's defense of a murder charge, suggesting that she may claim she was a "battered woman" when she allegedly

plunged a butcher's knife into the heart of Kevin Finch, 21, of Milford.

State's Attorney Mary Galvin, who is prosecuting the case against Willette, could not be reached Friday for comment.

Willette's attorney, Tara L. Knight of New Haven, says Finch "demonstrated dangerous, violent and turbulent behavior" toward Willette prior to the killing last year, which occurred in the couple's trailer home in West Haven. Knight also claims that Finch sustained a traumatic brain injury in 1996, which caused him to suffer from a "number of medical and emotional problems." He was

once under the conservatorship of his father, she claims.

"Individuals suffering from TBI are prone to a lack of impulse control and may experience exacerbated emotional states," the motion states.

Knight was unavailable Friday for comment. But a partner in her law firm, Glenn Conway, said "obviously, if the victim in this case was prone to violent outbursts or aggressive behavior," the information in the medical records "would go toward the defense of this claim."

Last month, the case against Willette moved closer to trial after she rejected a plea bargain agree-

ment that Conway described as "wholly unacceptable."

Police said that on April 28 Willette grabbed a butcher knife and stabbed her boyfriend in the chest during a domestic dispute that escalated at the couple's trailer home at 690 Jones Hill Road. Finch was taken to Yale-New Haven Hospital by ambulance and later pronounced dead.

A quarrel over money reportedly took place between the two before Finch was stabbed, court-house sources said.

The deadly fight wasn't the couple's first contact with police, officials said. Milford police last year investigated a domestic dis-

pute between the two, authorities said. At the time of his death, Finch was facing charges that he allegedly kidnapped a Milford woman's cat and ransomed the animal for \$120.

When Finch was charged with the so-called "catnapping," widespread media attention of the case prompted Finch's father to come forward to defend his son.

In an interview with the Register, Barry Finch revealed his son had sustained brain damage in a hit-and-run motor vehicle accident. He said his son was not thinking clearly when he decided to steal the cat and hide out in a motel room with the pet.