

Accused killer's mental state causing legal uncertainties

New assessment ordered to determine if he can stand trial

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EDMONTON - A man accused of beating a cabbie into a coma and murdering his brother's wife has been sent back to hospital for further psychiatric assessment.

In court Wednesday, Provincial Court Judge David Tilley agreed with Crown prosecutor Nicole Lachance, who said a recent psychiatric report was inconclusive at best.

"There seems to be a variation ... amongst the psychiatrists," Tilley said before ordering Kenneth Butler to return to Alberta Hospital, where he will undergo 30 days of further testing.

The psychological assessment will help lawyers determine whether Butler could be found criminally responsible for the crimes he is accused of. Tilley refused a media request to make the assessment available to the public.

On April 4, Butler tried to visit his brother Michael's southeast Edmonton home. Michael and his wife, Stephanie, were aware of Kenneth's violent past and called police.

Butler was arrested but released the following morning on \$300 bail. He was ordered to stay away from his brother's home.

One day after his release, police were called to the same area to investigate the severe beating of 61-year-old cab driver Pavan Chohan.

Shortly after police arrived, Kenneth Butler allegedly approached officers and explained that he had been somehow involved.

Police believe that Stephanie Butler was attacked and killed in her home while officers were outside investigating the assault on the cab driver.

Stephanie's parents found her body the following day. Kenneth Butler's family later said he had a long history of erratic behaviour, mental-health problems and drug addiction.

He is expected to make his next court appearance on Dec. 28.

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