

Victim's husband urges reform

Files complaint with cops that pushes for changes to repeat offender policy



Stephanie Butler

Toronto News

The Edmonton Journal

April 16, 2007

The husband of a woman who was murdered in the couple's own home has demanded that police keep better track of repeat offenders who have served their time and are back on the street.

Two days before 25-year-old Stephanie Butler's death, her brother-in-law, Ken Butler, showed up at the couple's home. The couple, aware of his history of drug addiction and violence, called police. He was released from jail the next day on the condition he not return to their residence.

On April 6, police allege Stephanie Butler was attacked and killed while investigators were on the scene of an alleged assault on a nearby cab driver. Moments later, Ken Butler appeared, sat down in the back of a police cruiser, and identified himself as the suspect in the cab driver's beating.

He was charged with aggravated assault in the cabbie's beating and police say murder charges are pending against him in his sister-in-law's death.

"I believe there should be mandatory psychiatric evaluation of repeat offenders when said offenders are seen by the justice of the peace," Michael Butler wrote in a complaint filed with the Edmonton Police Commission Friday.

"Responding to the scene of a crime, police should make policy dictate that when repeat offenders are picked up or arrested by the police that the officer on the scene check for any restraint orders issued on said offender or check in on the person that has the restraining order."

Meanwhile, a website that claims to be created by the victim's family, butlerpetition.com, says Stephanie's death has motivated them to demand changes in policing because she was allegedly killed by a repeat offender.

"We need to promote better information sharing and co-operation between our mental health system and the justice system," the website states.

"A person with a history of violent or dangerous anti-social behaviour should remain in treatment facilities."

steve lillebuen/metro edmonton
steve.lillebuen@metronews.ca