The Telegram

Newman wins bail appeal

David Bagby weighs in on pending release

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12 Jan 2010 BY STEVE BARTLETT

The man accused in the slaying of Chrissy Predham-Newman is a step closer to being released from custody.

On Friday, a panel of judges reached a decision on a bail appeal filed by Raymond Gerald Newman's lawyers.

" We are satisfied that it is appropriate to release Mr. Newman on conditions to be set after hearing further from counsel," the Court of Appeal judges wrote.

That means Newman could be freed after a hearing on bail restrictions, such as his curfew and whom he cannot contact, which is expected to happen this week.

It's likely one of two things will happen at that time.

Raymond Newman at a court appearance for second-degree murder in connection with Chrissy Predham-Newman's death.

Either lawyers for both sides will negotiate and present conditions to the Court of Appeal for approval, or the defence and Crown will partially agree and have the Court of Appeal make a final ruling on Newman's restrictions.

There is a publication ban on almost all aspects of the Court of Appeal decision.

Newman, the victim's estranged husband, was arrested and charged with second-degree murder in June 2009 after a lengthy, 2 1/2-year police probe into the crime.

The couple had a young daughter, Ireland.

Predham-Newman's body was found Jan. 21, 2007, at her Airport Heights apartment in St. John's.

The 28-year-old's throat was reportedly slit and she had been stabbed numerous times.

Supreme Court Justice Robert Fowler denied Newman bail at the end of September. His appeal was heard Dec. 17.

Friday's decision didn't sit well with Predham-Newman's mother, Yvonne Harvey.

She issued a media release Saturday saying she was appalled, calling it a " bastardization of the word justice."

Harvey noted nothing that protects victims has changed since the Turner/Bagby report.

That review was called after Shirley Turner killed herself and her son Zachary while awaiting extradition to the U.S. to stand trial for the murder of her child's father, Andrew Bagby. Turner was on bail at the time. "How soon they forget," Harvey said of the 2003 tragedy.

The situation involving Newman is different from the Turner case, in that he does not have custody of his three-year-old daughter, who is in the care of her late mother's relatives.

Still, David Bagby, Andrew's father and Zachary's grandfather, weighed in on Newman's pending release.

"Same stuff, different case," he wrote in an e-mail. "Of course (my wife) Kate and I know how Yvonne Harvey feels right now, as we were helpless to prevent Shirley Turner from drowning our grandson Zachary back in 2003."

Bagby, who has fought for bail reform since his family's tragedy, further empathized with Harvey, saying she is sick with worry for the safety of her granddaughter and anyone else who might cross Newman while he's out on bail.

"And she is enraged that her murdered daughter Chrissy's life means so little to legal authorities," Bagby added.

"If Ray Newman 'goes Turner,' yet another innocent person — truly innocent, not just presumed so as a matter of legal form, despite evidence to the contrary — will pay the ultimate price for this legal folly."

Newman's preliminary hearing on the second-degree murder charge is set to begin Feb. 2.

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