

As new girlfriend watches in court, prosecutors say they will seek death for man accused of tossing baby on I-275

By Colleen Jenkins, Times Staff Writer
Posted: Jun 17, 2009 08:31 AM

TAMPA — Prosecutors announced today that they will seek the death penalty against Richard McTear Jr., who is accused of tossing his girlfriend's son out the window of a moving car onto Interstate 275 last month.

The announcement came before a hearing on McTear's motion to keep certain evidence from becoming public before his trial. Public defenders said they are concerned it might influence potential jurors.

Hillsborough Circuit Judge Gregory Holder denied the motion.

"At this point in these proceedings, it is premature to characterize the current adverse publicity as a serious and imminent threat to the administration of justice," Holder wrote in his order. "It has not been shown that (the) defendant's right to a fair trial is in any reasonable way threatened by the reports surrounding the trial and the parties."

Throughout the hearing, a woman who described herself as McTear's new girlfriend and fiancée cried. When prosecutors announced they would seek the death penalty, Ida Williams, 40, bowed her head, tears streaming down her face.

Authorities say McTear, 21, attacked Jasmine Bedwell and her 3-month-old son, Emanuel Wesley Murray, on May 5. They say he threw her son onto the concrete, drove off with the infant and threw him from a car.

The boy was not his son.

McTear had been accused by other women of stalking, dragging and beating them unconscious, breaking into homes and threatening to kill a child, at least once. None of those women, including Bedwell, obtained injunctions against him.

Arrested for domestic violence at age 14, McTear now faces a first-degree murder charge. He pleaded not guilty last month.

After his May 20 plea in a Tampa courtroom, McTear called out to Bedwell, 17.

"I love you, Jasmine!" he said as courtroom deputies led him away.

It was unclear if Bedwell heard him.

But McTear apparently has moved on.

Ida Williams, of Tampa, said she got to know McTear through her 17-year-old son, who knew him from school. She said she recently began dating him after his arrest, visiting him frequently in jail.

"I go all the time," Williams said during a break in the hearing. She said they are engaged to be married and that she doesn't believe the charges against him.

"He's too kind to do something like that," Williams said, calling him "beautiful, sweet, kind, gentle."

And God-fearing, she said.

"He's stressed, but he knows God can do anything," she said. "We both know that."

Williams was unemployed as of last year, according to Hillsborough County jail records.

She said she wishes she could trade places with McTear. Why? "For the love that we both have for each other," she said. "It's outstanding."

She cried throughout the hearing, her sniffles heard throughout the courtroom.