

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

WOMAN CLAIMS SELF-DEFENSE IN SHOOTING OF KINLOCH MAN

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Vivian Peebles calmly walked past six children, ages 1 to 13, in an apartment in Kinloch last summer then shot their father four times, a prosecutor told a jury Wednesday.

The victim, Maurice Thomas, 41, survived gunshot wounds to his stomach and legs but died several weeks later of an unrelated heart attack. Peebles, 31, of the 5100 block of Wabada Avenue, is on trial in St. Louis County Circuit Court on charges of assault, burglary and armed criminal action. Her attorney says she shot Thomas in self-defense.

Thomas and Peebles quarreled earlier the night of Aug. 10 at a house in Ferguson where Thomas' father lived with Peebles' sister.

Prosecutor **Bret Rich** gave the following account of what happened next:

During the quarrel, Maurice Thomas' girlfriend of 17 years, Joan Dyson, hit Peebles in the face. Peebles and Thomas started fighting. Thomas' father broke it up and made them leave his house.

About two hours later, Thomas and Dyson were in the bedroom of their apartment in the 5500 block of Mabel Avenue. One of Dyson's seven children was asleep on the bed. Peebles walked in the front door, went down a hallway past a baby sitter and six other children. Then she fired into the bedroom.

After the shooting, Thomas staggered into the hallway and out the front door.

Dyson said she had heard Peebles say: "Maurice . . . I told you I was going to get you."

Defense attorney Randy Knopf told the jury that Peebles had gone to the apartment to talk to Thomas about the earlier fight and had fired the shots in self-defense when Thomas came at her in the hallway.

Caption:

Correction:

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