

By Linda Looney-Bond
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Shantae Morgan demonstrated a choke hold on Clayton County District Attorney Tracy Graham Lawson in court Tuesday. Assistant District Attorney Mike Thurston had asked Morgan to show the jury how defendant, Christopher Durr, allegedly attacked Morgan's sister, Rashae Alicia Morgan, whom Durr is accused of stabbing to death in June 2005.

Durr, 26, is standing trial before Judge Matthew Simmons, in Clayton County Superior Court. He's accused in the double murder of 20-year-old Rashae Morgan — the mother of his two children — and her new boyfriend, Dorian Robinson, by stabbing both, multiple times, on June 27, 2005.

The stabbings occurred at the Wren's Crossing Apartments, located at 500 Roberts Drive, in Riverdale.

On day two of the trial, Tuesday, Shantae Morgan told the jury that Durr had put her sister in a choke hold during an alleged domestic-violence incident, just days before the murders. Shantae Morgan said there had been a history of domestic violence between her sister, Rashae, and Durr.

"She [Rashae Morgan] was explaining how she wanted to move back home," Shantae Morgan said. "She was upset and tired of being hit on. She was just ready to get away," the witness continued. "I've seen a bruise from her hair being pulled out, because I do her hair, that's what I do," Shantae Morgan told the court.

Former Riverdale Police Officer Todd Cleven, who is now a police officer with the City of Fayetteville, was called to the stand by prosecutors. He testified that he responded to a domestic-violence call from Rashae Morgan on June 20, 2005.

"She was upset and crying. She was real emotional," Cleven said. He said he saw a few marks on Morgan's back. "I advised her that, at that time, I did not have enough evidence to pursue charges," Cleven said. However, the officer said he advised Rashae Morgan that she could obtain warrants on her own.

Cleven said that he warned Christopher Durr that he could not return to the apartment. However, he said, on the following day, June 21, he responded to another domestic-violence call from Rashae Morgan, and determined that Durr had entered the apartment through a bedroom window.

"I obtained warrants against Mr. Durr for simple battery and criminal trespass," Cleven said on the stand.

Shantae Morgan told the court that the day before the murders, June 26, her sister was "cooking and smiling." She said Rashae had made a spaghetti dinner that night, and that she was impressed, because Rashae did not cook often.

Shantae Morgan testified that, the same night, her sister received several phone calls from Durr, and that Rashae Morgan placed the calls on speaker phone. "He was telling her, 'I'm giving you another chance to be with me,'" Morgan testified.

"What I heard on the speaker phone was, 'Today's the day. If I can't have you, no one else can,'" said Shantae Morgan.