

Lashley to lawyer up

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By Aisha I. Jefferson

About 15 members of Katina Jordan's family came to watch Omar Lashley, the man charged with shooting her to death, appear before a magistrate judge Monday.

Jordan's mother Marilyn Bell wept as Lashley told the judge he will hire his own attorney.

"I hope he burns in hell," said Jordan's stepfather, Lamar Warner, who said he was a witness to the shooting Wednesday in Stockbridge.

Lashley, 34, is expected to make a second court appearance Feb. 28. No members of Lashley's family attended the hearing. Lashley turned himself in to Henry County Police detectives around 5:30 p.m. Friday, Henry County Police said.

Warner said Jordan was trying to break up with Lashley, and he said Lashley asked Jordan to drive him to his auto paint and body shop on Covington Highway in DeKalb County.

"She was afraid to do it by herself," Warner said. "I wanted her to call the police."

Warner said Jordan, 32, feared Lashley would "come after her" if she called the police and he was arrested.

"He took my baby away but I wasn't able to bring her back," Warner said as he fought back tears.

Lashley took off in Jordan's car, which was left running, Warner said.

Warner said Lashley called his cell phone an hour later, asking if he hurt Jordan. Warner said Lashley told him he was headed to Florida, where his mother, son and sister live.

Jordan's death marked Henry County's first homicide of the year and the third in the past six months.

Flint Judicial Circuit District Attorney Tommy K. Floyd said his office will prosecute Lashley's case when it does go to trial. "It is a little too early to discuss his possible sentence," Floyd said.

Jordan's aunt Jeralyn Liggins said she thinks Jordan moved to Stockbridge from Decatur because "she was trying to get away from (Lashley)." Jordan was raised in Decatur and worked for Delta Environmental, Liggins said. Her funeral was Sunday in Sandersville.

Liggins claims Lashley was abusive toward Jordan, and that he lived with Jordan on and off in Stockbridge with her two daughters, Asia, 5, and Zhane, 10. Lashley is Asia's father. The girls were not home at the time of their mother's death.

Marjorie Lacy, executive director of Haven House Emergency Shelter for Women, said the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence reported at least 85 people experienced domestic violence-related deaths in 2004.

Lacy said she wished her agency had been made aware of Jordan's situation.

"We can't guarantee that we'll keep them safe, but we can sure try," Lacy said, adding there are a few steps women in abusive relationships can take. She recommended that women in abusive relationships go to an emergency shelter, such as Haven House, that will help them get a temporary protective order.

"He has to stay away, or the police can pick him up," Lacy said. She also said an emergency shelter can help abuse victims develop a safety plan to evade their abusers.

"It's very dangerous to leave an abusive situation," Lacy said. "They become very violent when you leave."

When asked whether Jordan had sought assistance from an emergency shelter, a family member, who did not want to be identified, said, "We really don't want to divulge that information right now."

Lacy said abused mothers are not the only victims of abusive relationships. Children, even if they are not physically harmed, can develop some mental health problems from witnessing the violence, she said.

Lacy said Jordan's family "really needs to go ahead and get help for those children," citing depression, withdrawal and low self-esteem as some of the problems the girls could experience.

"The earlier they get help, the better," Lacy said.

Lashley had been on the run since Wednesday, when police found Jordan's body outside the home they shared on Valley Drive in Stockbridge. Police said she was shot during an argument.

Later Wednesday morning, DeKalb County Police found Jordan's dark green 1992 Infiniti Q45, which Lashley drove away, inside a parking lot at a lock and key shop on Glenwood Road in Decatur.

Haven House operates a 24-hour crisis line for women in abusive relationships: (770) 954-9229.