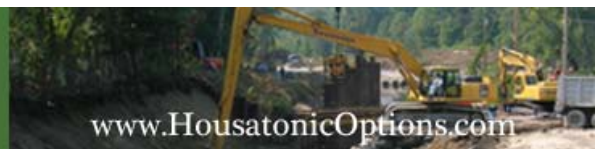


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## Defense attorney says no forensic evidence links Spader to NH murder

Posted by John Ellement October 26, 2010 11:25 AM

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By Brian MacQuarrie and John R. Ellement, Globe Staff

NASHUA, N.H. – Steven Spader was the ringleader behind the horrific murder last October of a Mont Vernon mother and the attempted murder of her 11-year-old daughter, a prosecutor said today in opening statements in Spader's first-degree murder trial.



Steven Spader

But defense attorney Andrew Winters told the Hillsborough Superior Court jury that there was no forensic evidence linking Spader to the killing of Kimberly Cates and the attack on Jamie Cates, and that his 18-year-old client is not guilty of the horrific crime he is accused of committing.

Winters also said that authorities' allegation that Spader was the leader of a gang called the Disciples of Destruction was a misunderstanding of Spader's interest in a cable television show that follows a fictional California motorcycle gang.

"In general, no one who was supposedly in this gang took it seriously," he said. "No one took Steve Spader seriously. He constantly bragged, exaggerated, said things that were not true ... to make himself look tough."

"The physical evidence does not tie Steve Spader to these horrible crimes," she said.

Winters also said that three co-defendants, who have agreed to testify against Spader, have falsely shifted blame to Spader to spare themselves long prison sentences.

But during his opening statement, Assistant Attorney General Peter Hinckley told jurors that Spader was the driving force behind the random attack that shattered the peace of a small town of 2,366 residents.

"Who would have the heart to attack a helpless and defenseless mother and child in their

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bed and then laugh and boast about it?" Hinckley said in court.

Hinckley, who was standing about three feet away from Spader, pointed to the defendant and said, "Him. It's what he planned, plotted, and agreed to do."

Hinckley said that Kimberly Cates was stabbed more than 30 times and that Spader had gloated that at one point the woman's eye popped out of its socket as the result of the ruthless attack.

Prosecutors allege that Spader and a second defendant, Christopher Gribble, jointly attacked Cates and her daughter. Gribble has pleaded not guilty to first-degree murder charges and is awaiting trial.

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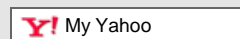


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