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Dead woman, husband had violent history**Troy D. Hughes was twice accused of battering wife**

By Patricia Lynch Kimbro
HERALD-LEADER STAFF WRITER

Troy Dewane Hughes choked, hit and threatened to kill his wife, Kecia Hughes, when the two argued over whose relatives they'd spend Thanksgiving with two years ago in Louisville, court records show.

Yesterday the 33-year restaurant cook pleaded not guilty in Fayette County District Court to murder in the Jan. 3 strangulation death of his wife. The body of the 28-year-old mother of two was found by police about noon Sunday, after family members asked police to check on her.

Hughes, who worked at Rally's on New Circle Road, was arrested not far from the apartment he shared with his wife and her two young sons at the Derbytownte Apartments on Bainbridge Drive, shortly after her body was discovered. Kecia Hughes' sons, ages 5 and 9, were with their father in Louis-ville at the time of her death.

Two co-workers of the couple were shocked to learn of Kecia Hughes' violent death.

But Jefferson County court records show Kecia Hughes had accused her husband of domestic violence on at least two occasions.

A judge found Troy Hughes guilty of domestic violence on Dec. 9, 1996, after Kecia Hughes said her husband hit, choked and threatened to kill her.

"Respondent became violent and tore up two lamps, two telephones, kicked petitioner, pushed, hit and choked petitioner several times and had been violent with her before," read a petition Kecia Hughes signed. The records also noted that she had large bruises on her neck, left hand, face and right side at the time.

From outward appearances the two seemed a "normal couple," said Angela Billman and Kathleen Campbell.

Billman worked with Troy Hughes at Rally's and Campbell shared an office with Kecia Hughes at the Kentucky Clinic where Kecia Hughes had worked as a medical clerk since August. It was unclear when the Hugheses moved to Lexington.

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"She'd mention being mad at him sometimes, but it just seemed like the ordinary husband-wife disagreement," Campbell said yesterday.

Troy Hughes would call his wife at work and come by to pick her up sometimes, she said.

"She talked about her family a lot. Those boys were her life," said Campbell, adding, "She's really going to be missed around here. She was a joy to work with."

Other Jefferson County court records show Troy Hughes was charged with stalking his wife on April 8, 1997. Kecia Hughes also charged him with assault and terroristic threatening at that time. An emergency protective order was issued after that incident but the records don't indicate how the accusations were resolved.

Hughes was also charged with second-degree burglary, no forced entry of a residence on April 9, 1997. That charge was later reduced to criminal trespass.

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