

LOCAL

Occult played role in killing, state says

By Tucker McCormack

Register Staff

MILFORD — A West Haven woman charged with stabbing to death her live-in boyfriend indulged in witchcraft and other forms of black magic, prosecutors say, and wrote letters that will establish a motive for the killing, according to court documents.

In a brief filed in Superior Court, Deputy Assistant State's Attorney Kevin Doyle said the state may seek to admit evidence linking Charissa Willette, 18, to the practice of the occult and other activities "presently referred to as the Goth movement."

The prosecution also will offer letters written by Willette to estab-

lish her "intent and motive" in the killing of Kevin Finch, 21, formerly of Milford, the documents say.

"This evidence, including the letters, will also be offered to refute a defense of accident by the defendant," the documents say.

Willette's attorney, Fara Knight of New Haven, responded angrily to the state's contention that witchcraft played a role in the killing, saying it was "an unabashed attempt by the state to link (Willette's) case to the fervor surrounding the Columbine High School tragedy."

"Besides being untrue, it's clearly inadmissible at trial and an attempt to taint the jury pool," Knight said of the state's claim.

Police said Willette grabbed a butcher knife and stabbed her boyfriend in the chest last year during a domestic dispute that escalated to murder at the couple's trailer home at 690 Jones Hill Road.

A quarrel over money took place between the two before Finch was stabbed, courthouse sources said.

The deadly fight wasn't the couple's first contact with police, officials said. Milford police last year investigated a domestic dispute between the two, authorities said.

Last week, Knight filed a motion requesting the prosecution produce Finch's medical records in an attempt to show that a tra-

umatic brain injury caused Finch to act violently toward Willette prior to the killing.

The information in Finch's medical records would be used to show Willette was acting in self-defense when she allegedly plunged a butcher's knife into her boyfriend's heart, Knight said.

A Superior Court judge has not yet ruled on the motion.

Finch sustained a traumatic brain injury in 1996, which caused him to suffer from a "number of medical and emotional problems," Knight said.

Last month, the case against Willette moved closer to trial after she rejected a plea bargain agree-