

Devil Gets His Day In Murder Trial

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DANBURY, Conn. — The devil gets his day in court this week in a case authorities call "a routine murder" and the defense attorney calls a clear-cut case of demonic possession.

The case involves a husband-wife team of nationally known "demonologists," a 13-year-old boy some say is possessed by the devil, the efforts of Roman Catholic priests to rid the boy of the spirits and a curly haired teen-ager named Arne Cheyenne Johnson who challenged the demons to take him on.

That teen-ager, Arne Cheyenne Johnson, stands accused of murder and Martin Minnella, the defense attorney, plans to argue that the devil made him do it, literally.

The trial begins Wednesday in a tiny, second-floor courtroom here, and attorneys predict it could take up to two months to seat a jury because of detailed questions about spiritual beliefs Minnella is expected to ask prospective jurors.

Johnson, 19, has been in a Bridgeport jail in lieu of \$125,000 bond since his arrest on charges in the Feb. 16 stabbing death of Alan Bono, 40-year-old manager of the Brookfield Kennel.

Minnella's defense is straightforward: the devil possessed Johnson's body several times in the months before Bono's death and then again at the moment of the attack.

Minnella will first have to convince the jury there is such a thing as the devil and demonic possession. Secondly, he will have to convince jurors that, in his words, "this vile force or spirit manipulated my client's body and caused

the ultimate demise" of Bono.

If allowed into court and if successful, the defense would be a landmark in U.S. law, legal experts say. But the decision to admit Minnella's evidence rests with Superior Court Judge Robert Callahan.

Minnella says he's confident Callahan will see things his way.

"The state must prove he had specific intent to murder Bono, and the defense is allowed to show any evidence that indicates he didn't have intent," Minnella said in an interview last week.

To Walter Flanagan, the state's attorney who will be prosecuting, the case is "a routine murder, insofar as homicide can be classified routine."

John Anderson, chief of police in Brookfield, a quiet town of 12,000 north of Danbury, said, "There's nothing in the crime itself to indicate it had anything to do with demons."

The stabbing occurred while Johnson and Bono were arguing over Johnson's girlfriend, Deborah Glatzel, 26, police said. Johnson and Miss Glatzel were living in an apartment next door to the kennel, and Miss Glatzel groomed dogs for Bono.

Acquaintances have described Johnson and Bono as "the best of friends."

Five months before the stabbing, Johnson was involved in efforts to rid Miss Glatzel's brother, David, then 11, of 42 demons, according to Ed and Lorraine Warren, self-styled experts on demons, who are expected to testify for the defense.

In tape recordings the Warrens say were made in the home, a voice identified as Johnson's can be heard challenging David's demons to "take me on. Control me. Leave this boy alone."

The Warrens claim the demons did just that.