

Deportee fears for her life

Evil stepfather, who killed her mother, waits for her

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The Gazette

After fleeing from a nightmarish existence in her home country of St. Vincent three years ago, Yolanda Williams had finally found peace after establishing a quiet life for herself and her 6-year-old son in Montreal.

But that comfort is about to come to a bitter end: on Christmas Eve, Immigration Canada rejected her request to stay on compassionate and humanitarian grounds, an act Williams's lawyer calls "the unholy Christmas present."

Williams, 21, has to show up at Dorval airport tomorrow, to be greeted by officials who plan to ensure that she boards a plane bound for the small Caribbean island of St. Vincent, a place where she fears she will be killed.

Williams's past reads like the plot of a harrowing movie: she endured three years of physical and sexual abuse at the hands of her stepfather; she saw him stab her mother to death after the older woman caught him in bed with Williams when she was 9.

Williams testified against her stepfather at his trial, and he was found guilty of manslaughter. He was released from prison after 4½ years, hunted Williams down and threatened twice to kill her.

The image of her stepfather brandishing a knife and uttering threats haunted Williams so deeply, she packed her bags and escaped to Canada in 1995.

"I'm terrified to go back," she said softly in a telephone interview, her tears choking her for a few seconds.

"My life is in danger in St. Vincent by my stepfather. My stepfather is a madman. Now I have to go back, and I know he will carry out his promise to kill me.

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Appeal to minister is last hope

Woman's request to stay in Canada on compassionate grounds was rejected Dec. 24

DEPORTEE

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"I have nowhere to go there."
Williams has been on welfare since she came to Canada, preferring to care for her son, Dameon Forde, rather than to find work and put him in daycare.

But since he started school in September, she's been interested in taking courses in the cosmetics industry. They live in a small apartment in Montreal West.

Williams received a series of blows this year in her bid to remain in Canada.

In March, the immigration and refugee board said she had failed to provide any proof that her stepfather

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Lawyer Eric Sutton

had killed her mother or that he had even spent time in jail.

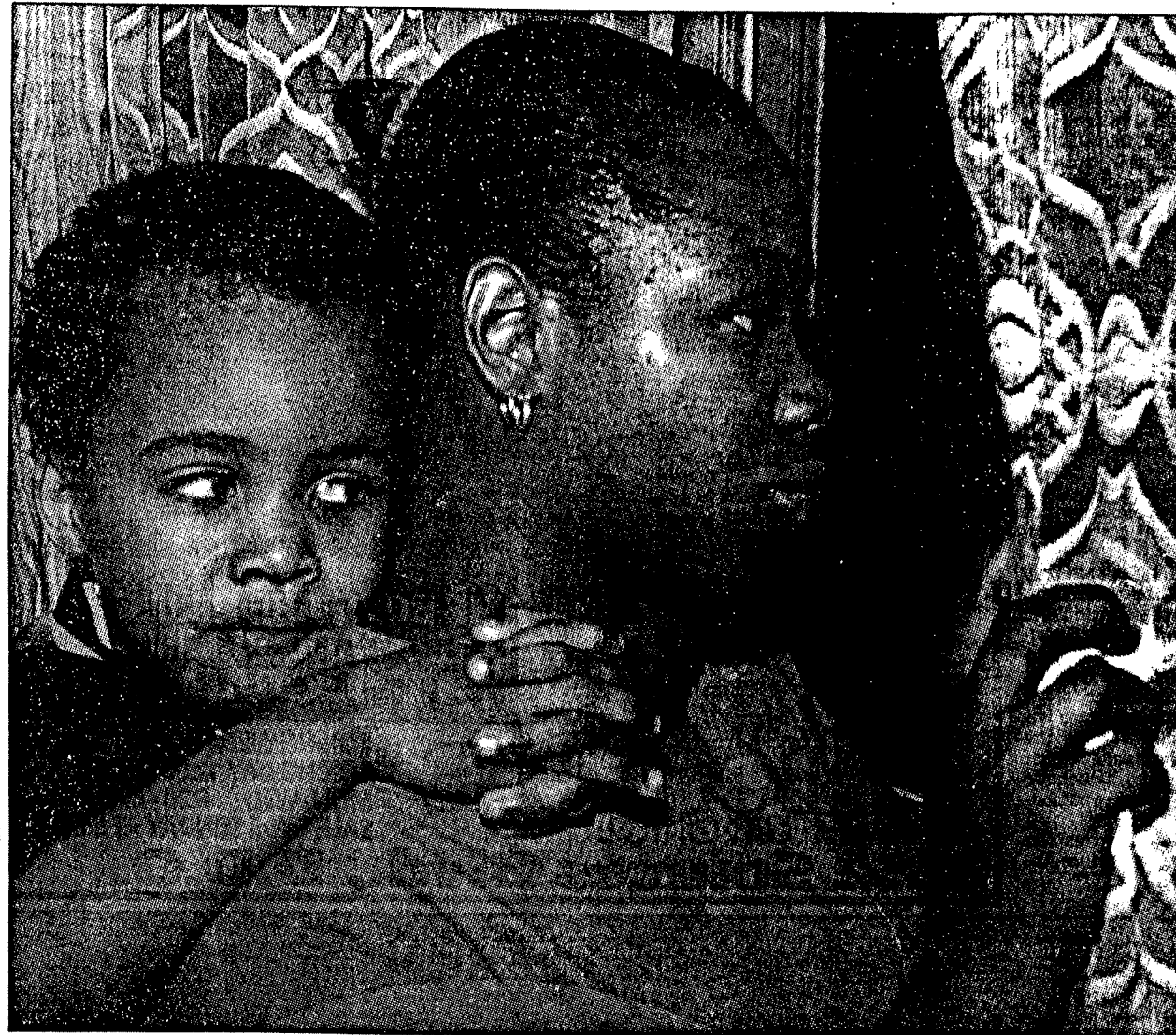
Williams replied that she had tried for months to obtain a copy of her mother's autopsy report in St. Vincent and a certification from the police force, but to no avail.

"We only got the evidence from the police in St. Vincent in November," said Williams's lawyer, Eric Sutton.

"It took her a long time to get the proof. No one in St. Vincent is interested in doing you any favours."

In October, the Federal Court rejected Williams's request to appeal the refugee-board decision. On Nov. 17, Justice Max Teitelbaum rejected a request to reconsider his October decision.

After Williams received the coroner's report and the police certification of her stepfather's time in prison, Sutton filed a request to allow Williams to stay in Canada on compassionate



Yolanda Williams says she fears for her life, and that of her 6-year-old son, Dameon Forde, if they are sent back to her native St. Vincent. She says her stepfather has threatened to kill her.

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and humanitarian grounds.

The final blow was rendered Thursday, when the request was denied.

Sutton plans to make an 11th-hour appeal today directly to federal Immi-

gration Minister Lucienne Robillard, urging her to reconsider Williams's situation.

"The minister always has the power to exempt someone," Sutton said, "and

she can do that on compassionate grounds.

"The minister can always take a personal look at a case. If that is refused, there is nothing else I can do."

Williams said she fears not only for her own life, but also for her son's.

"I don't want to leave Canada. I am too scared to leave.

"I want to stay."

Lawyer working free for Appeal