

'He Tried to Kill Me'

TONY BLAIS, COURT BUREAU
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Edmonton, Canada - Speaking through sign-language interpreters, a deaf and mute woman told a court yesterday she has nightmares about her husband, also deaf and mute, attacking her. In a videotaped victim impact statement played at a sentencing hearing for Mukesh Ratnum Gounder, 33, Sharmila Gounder relived the April 26, 2004, scissors assault.

"He tried to kill me and I have these wounds all over my body," said Sharmila, who is now divorced and struggling to survive in New Zealand with the couple's two children.

"I still remember my husband trying to kill me. I still don't understand the reason. I never did anything bad," she said in the May 27 interview.

"I suffered through 13 years of abuse, with him finally trying to kill me," she said, adding she needs counselling.

"It's still very vivid. I have nightmares about it. I dream about my husband and he's all dressed in black."

Sharmila said the two children, an eight-year-old boy and one-year-old girl, also have nightmares, sleep with her every night and do not want to be left

alone.

Gounder earlier pleaded guilty to aggravated assault for brutally attacking his estranged wife with a pair of scissors at her home in front of the children.

Vijay Gounder, then seven, called 911 to report the attack, saying: "I need an ambulance. My dad almost killed my mom."

Gounder was bound by a restraining order at the time due to an April 14, 2004, assault on his ex-wife where she was allegedly confined and choked.

Court heard Gounder entered his wife's suite while she was working a late shift at a McDonald's restaurant, and when she arrived home with the kids about 2:20 a.m., he jumped out and began attacking her with scissors.

The victim was stabbed and slashed before pushing him out into the hallway and locking the door.

She was still screaming when police arrived, and she was covered in blood.

Gounder was arrested at his parents' home where he was sleeping in a bedroom with blood on his clothes.

The victim suffered three puncture wounds to her chest, belly and back, two open

wounds to her forearm and three smaller wounds, and needed numerous sutures.

Court heard the couple had been married for 13 years after first meeting at a school for the deaf in Fiji.

The hearing is slated to continue at a later date.