

Lovers' quarrel ends with mystery death

Teen girl is shoved & collapses at train station

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Heartbroken relatives were struggling yesterday to learn why an 18-year-old college student collapsed on a subway platform and died after a fight with her boyfriend.

Zakiya Kennedy's family said yesterday that the boyfriend had pushed the young woman on the uptown D train platform at the 42nd St. station Friday evening. Kennedy collapsed minutes later and was dead within the hour, cops said.

One distraught relative told the boyfriend over the phone yesterday, "You left her to die," according to Erica Williams, 41, Kennedy's aunt.

But Williams, who was receiving a steady stream of grieving friends at her niece's apartment in the Frederick Douglass Houses on the upper West Side,

didn't blame the suitor.

"He loved her. It's a tragedy," the aunt said. "He did not mean to hurt her. He is going to have to live with this for the rest of his life."

An autopsy on Kennedy performed yesterday by the city medical examiner was inconclusive, officials said. No arrests have been made.

Kennedy, a freshman at Berkeley College in midtown, was on the subway platform at 8 p.m. with her boyfriend of a year, whom family members identified only by his first name, Jermaine.

"They were having a stupid fight over something that's not important," said Williams, who was comforting Kennedy's grieving mother, Bridget, over the loss of her only child. "He walked away from her, and she came up behind him."

"He then pushed her away," she said. "She fell and he left."

Kennedy got to her feet and then told a cop in the station that she had fallen and was suffering head and leg pain, although there was no visible sign

of injury, police said.

"She told the cop that she fell," Williams said, "and then she keeled over."

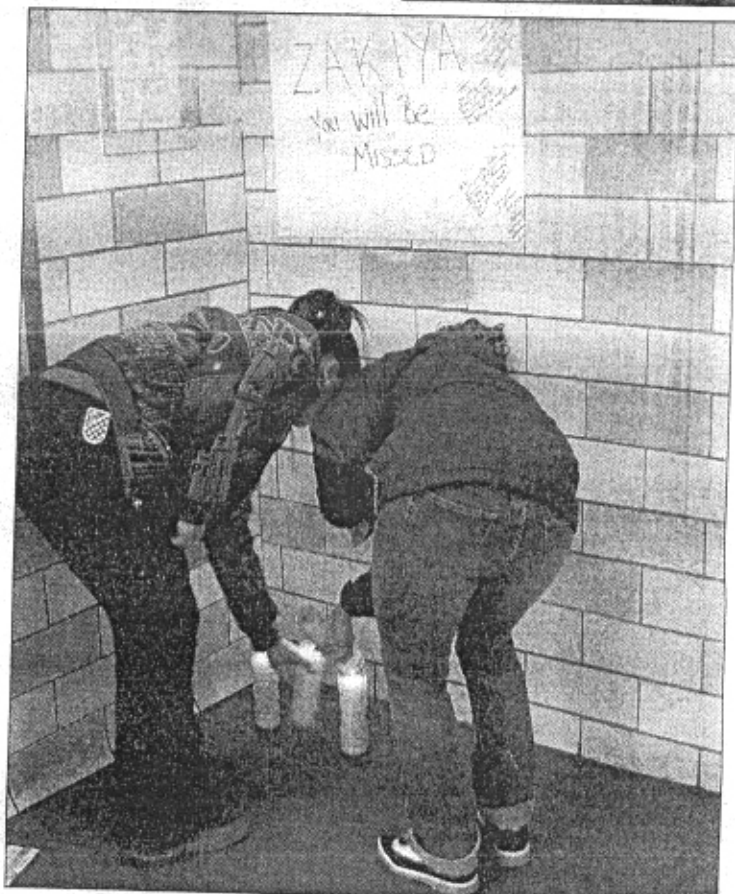
Kennedy was taken to Bellevue Hospital, where she was pronounced dead at 9:15 p.m., police said.

Detectives were expected to interview Jermaine, who lives in Jamaica, Queens, by last night, but a police spokesman said no one was in custody.

Kennedy and Jermaine were high school sweethearts who had been dating for almost a year after going to the senior prom together at Louis Brandeis High School on the upper West Side, her family said.

Kennedy, a fashion major who was born in Oakland, Calif., but moved to Manhattan as an infant, was planning to try out for the reality show "America's Top Model" at the end of the month, and that was all she could talk about, her family said.

"She was working out and getting ready," Williams said. "She was a beautiful girl, one of those kids you didn't have to worry about."



GRIEF Friends light candles in her apartment building for Zakiya Kennedy (top), who died after collapsing at train station.

SPRING AHEAD

Did you remember to set your clocks ahead one hour today?

