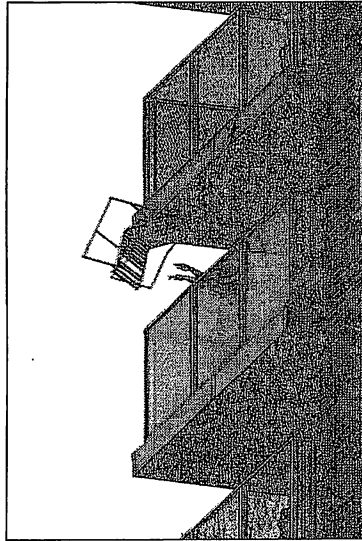
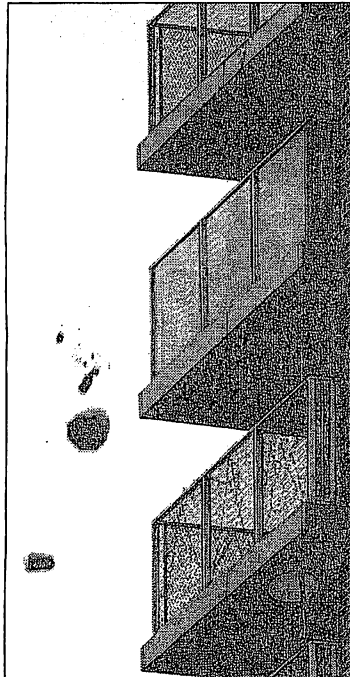


# FAMILY SEES HOSP FAILURE AS SPARK TO EXPLOSIVE MURDER



COREY SIPKIN DAILY NEWS

After stabbing granny he loved 97 times and tossing her off 21st-floor terrace in 2001, Rashaan Lamb heaves furniture and plants (above & l.) off it too, then climbs down terraces until cops nab him.



## A grisly meltdown

**R**ASHAAN LAMB stabbed his 78-year-old grandmother 97 times and then hurled her body onto the street from her 21st-floor Harlem balcony.

On trial last month, in connection with the brutal murder, however, was not Lamb but Harlem Hospital.

The facility was charged with medical malpractice and negligence allegedly leading to the slaying — in a lawsuit brought by Betty Lamb, the killer's mother and victim's daughter.

"In one day I lost my mom and my son," said Betty Lamb, who was walking up 147th St. when she saw Rashaan Lamb throw her mother off the balcony.

He pleaded guilty to murder and is serving a 23-year prison sentence.

"It never should have happened," said Betty Lamb. "Never. They never should have discharged him."

Before the murder, Rashaan Lamb, then 24, was a patient at Harlem Hospital's psychiatric emergency room.

He had been kept there by psychiatrists for nearly a week, diagnosed variously as suicidal, homicidal, aggressive, hallucinating, suffering from manic depression and drug-induced psychotic disorder.

Two doctors also called him "a danger to himself and others." He was continuously medicated with mood-stabilizing and anti-psychotic drugs.

On the sixth day of his stay, however, Lamb was discharged

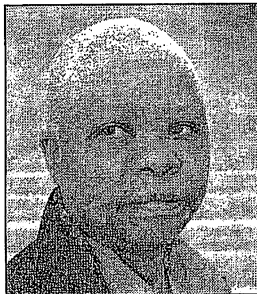
BY WILLIAM SHERMAN  
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

by a third doctor as "baseline" — normal — according to hospital records. He was given no medication.

Eight days later, on Feb. 19, 2001, he attacked his grandmother, Fannie Kelly, a woman he loved and who helped raise him.

On behalf of her mother's estate, Betty Lamb demanded \$1.25 million in damages from the city.

As the jury deliberated, the city made a substantial settlement offer, which Lamb accepted.



"We made our point, the city knows this and just maybe it'll change the way decisions are made on psychiatric care and discharges," said Jeff Korek, her attorney.

Attorney Scott Zimmerman, representing the city, had argued there was no departure from "accepted standards of care," and that psychiatry itself is an imprecise science.

It was a premeditated murder, he said.

In fact, for the first 24 years of his life, Rashaan Lamb had no psychiatric history.

He once showed tremendous promise as valedictorian of his eighth-grade class. He won an academic and basketball scholarship to Rice High School in Harlem, then was recruited by the private Trevor Day School at 88th St. and Central Park West, also on an athletic and ac-

ademic scholarship.

Lamb's family life, however, was not conventional. His mother worked nights as an elevator starter and union steward at the World Trade Center. His father, Eddie Lamb, was a heroin addict who was in jail for the most part of 20 years, Betty Lamb testified.

"Sometime during high school, he [Rashaan Lamb] fell off the cliff," said Korek. "Nobody knows why, but he started using drugs, and he had a child at 17 with his girlfriend."

About four months before the murder, Rashaan Lamb started "hearing voices" telling him what to do, Betty Lamb testified. But she took no action. Neither did her son.

On Feb. 6, 2001, he got into a fistfight with his father at his grandmother's house. Betty Lamb called 911. Rashaan Lamb was caught by cops and taken to Harlem Hospital's psychiatric emergency room.

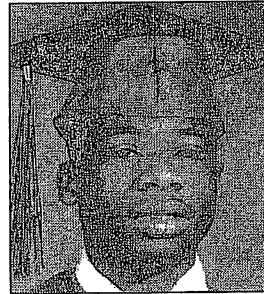
Toxicology tests disclosed that Lamb had cocaine, marijuana, Ecstasy and heroin in his bloodstream.

Dr. Carl St. Preux testified that he recommended that Lamb be admitted to a permanent bed in the regular psychiatric wards.

But there were no beds available, so Lamb remained in the psychiatric emergency room until his discharge.

"If I knew then what I know now, I never would have signed those discharge papers," said Betty Lamb.

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BRYAN SMITH

"In one day I lost my mom and son," says Betty Lamb (l.), daughter of victim, and mother of killer Rashaan Lamb (r.)