

Wife accused of trying to kill husband appears in court

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By: Missy Diaz
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Accused of trying to hire a hit man to kill her husband, Dalia Dippolito emerged from house arrest Tuesday for a court hearing in her divorce case from her husband of six months, Michael Dippolito.

Michael Dippolito is asking a judge to remove his wife's name from the deed of the townhome they shared, something he said he did at her urging less than three weeks after they wed.

Wearing a gray pantsuit - concealing her electronic ankle monitor - and suede burgundy pumps, Dalia Dippolito, 27, took the witness stand and invoked her Fifth Amendment right to remain silent when questioned about the validity of the quitclaim deed adding her to the title.

The deed was signed less than three weeks after Michael and Dalia Dippolito's Feb. 2, 2009, marriage and was followed by another quitclaim deed titling the home solely in the wife's name. That deed was signed - but never recorded - on July 31, five days before a hit man, allegedly hired by Dalia Dippolito, was to shoot Michael Dippolito, 39, twice in the head, according to Boynton Beach police.

Police faked a crime scene at the couple's Via de Pepi townhouse and told Dalia Dippolito that her husband was dead. Video of Dalia Dippolito's Aug. 5 arrest has drawn international attention thanks to the Internet and news broadcasts of her wailing at the scene of the purported crime.

Michael Dippolito's attorneys, Jason Brodie and Joshua Friedman, argued that the Feb. 28 quitclaim deed was invalid because one of the two witnesses was not present in the room when it was signed.

Andrew Pastor, Dalia Dippolito's divorce lawyer, countered that the couple's intention to title the home in both their names was not disputed.

Todd Surber, the attorney who handled the closing, testified that it is not uncommon for one of the witnesses to not physically be in the room during the signing of a deed.

Circuit Judge Chuck Burton will issue a written decision.

Michael Dippolito, who wore faded jeans and a button-down shirt, testified that his soon-to-be ex-wife convinced him that it would be in his best interest to remove his name from any assets while he was satisfying a \$191,000 probation lien for a 2003 criminal conviction for participating in a phone scam.

"I got a few phone calls from some fake lawyers who said it would be better," he explained as his reasoning for agreeing to add his wife's name to the title.

"At that point in time, did you know she was trying to kill you?" Brodie asked before Pastor swiftly objected.

Michael Dippolito has said he met his wife when he hired her as an escort a few months before they married. Police have said the August attempt to kill him was his wife's third try.

Hired killers from Riviera Beach ran off with her money the first time, and a plot to spike his Starbucks tea with antifreeze also didn't work, according to police.

Both Dippolitos declined to comment after the hearing.

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