

# Man Charged In Killing Of Daughter

By Bill Bryan  
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

A man who had said he killed his daughter in self-defense was charged Tuesday with first-degree murder after investigators said they were told that the girl had been physically abused by her parents.

Zein Hassan Isa, 58, was arrested about 2 p.m. Tuesday coming out of a friend's liquor store in the 3000 block of Martin Luther King Drive. The arrest was made moments after he was charged in at-large warrants with murder and armed criminal action.

Isa is being held on \$1 million bond. Homicide detectives said they received information that Isa may have been planning to flee the country.

Isa is charged with fatally stabbing his



Palestina Isa

daughter, Palestina "Tina" Isa, 16, an honor student at Roosevelt High School. Police said the girl was stabbed eight times in the chest and abdomen about 12:30 a.m. Monday in the family's home at 3759 Delor Street in south St. Louis.

Isa told police he stabbed his daughter only after she had attacked him with two knives during a quarrel over money. Isa was arrested and booked on suspicion of murder, but he was later released when a warrant was taken under advisement because the circuit attorney's office said the case needed more work.

When news of the girl's death circulated around Roosevelt High School, homicide detectives received information that led them to re-apply for charges against Isa, said Lt. Harry Hegger.

"Her close friends at school told us that she had been physically abused many times by her parents," Hegger said.

"According to her friends, it was not unusual for Tina to appear at school with bruises, welts and various injuries. The

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Lt. HARRY HEGGER, homicide division

physical abuse seemed to be routine."

Investigators said the victim's father had at times pulled the girl out of school to work in the family's grocery, at 4200 Shaw Boulevard.

Tina once left home for three days after being beaten, a friend told police. In fact, the quarrel that led to the fatal stabbing may have centered on her desire to leave

home, police said that her friends had said.

Homicide detectives were looking Tuesday afternoon for Isa's wife, Maria Isa, in an attempt to question her. She had sided with her husband in his account of the stabbing, police said.

Tina was an A student, taking such courses as analytical geometry and trigonometry; she planned on majoring in aeronautical engineering in college.

In an interview Monday with the Post-Dispatch, Zein Isa said that his daughter had come at him with two knives.

He said he had wrested a knife out of her hand, then stabbed her at least twice. He then indicated that he had taken a second knife away from her and stabbed her two more times.

Isa said the fight had been triggered by his daughter's demand that he give her \$5,000.

Isa said in the interview he did not know why his daughter wanted the money. He said that Tina was the youngest of his seven children.