

Canada

NO WARNING SIGNS: Neighbours of accused shocked by Quebec daycare crash



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Police are shown outside the home of Pierre Ny St-Amand in Laval, Que, Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2023.
PHOTO BY GRAHAM HUGHES /The Canadian Press

LAVAL, Que. — Neighbours of the Quebec man accused of killing two four-year-olds when the bus he was driving slammed into a daycare were shocked by the charges, describing him as a pleasant individual and doting father.

Pierre Ny St-Amand, a driver with the transit corporation in Laval, Que., was arrested at the scene and charged with two counts of first-degree murder as well as seven other charges, including attempted murder and aggravated assault.

Thanh-Ry Tran, a father of three, said his children played with St-Amand's kids and their wives would help each other with pickups and drop-offs at school. They also celebrated Christmas and children's birthdays together.

He described the accused as a good man who always said hello. He saw no warning signs ahead of Wednesday's tragic news.

"When I see it, I can't believe that it went this way," Tran said.

Little is known about St-Amand, who turned 51 on New Year's Day. Laval's mayor said he'd been a transit driver for about a decade in the city just north of Montreal and had a clean disciplinary record.

According to a St-Amand family genealogical website, the accused arrived in Quebec from Cambodia at age 11 in 1983. Tran noted St-Amand was of Cambodian origin, but no longer spoke the language. The Quebec Official Gazette shows that he changed his given name from Ny to Pierre Ny in 1991.

St-Amand grew up in Sept-Iles, in Quebec's North Shore region, and attended high school at Polyvalente Manikoutai, local news outlets reported.

As far as Tran knew, neither of St-Amand's children frequented the daycare where the crash occurred. He said he never saw signs of marital problems or other issues.

Tran said he went to work on Wednesday and his wife called him with the news.

"I said (to her) it was impossible that it was him," he said.

Records show St-Amand has lived in the detached home in a suburban Laval neighbourhood since 2014 with his spouse. He has no criminal record.

Witnesses described the bus driver as delirious after Wednesday's crash, saying he screamed and shed his clothes. On Thursday, Lionel Carmant, the province's social services minister, said there was no indication from health authorities that St-Amand had received care for mental health issues or had pending requests for help.

Nader Abou-Said, who lives next door to St-Amand, said they had a normal neighbourly relationship and he knew of no problems.

“How can someone with kids do something like this,” Abou-Said asked. “It doesn’t make sense.”

Sara-Maria Chehade, another next-door neighbour, said word of the arrest came as a shock, noting her father had shovelled snow with the accused after a recent storm.

“We never heard any screams or arguments. They were always together. They would go for walks as a family,” Chehade said.

“He played with his kids, he’d set up a swing to have them play ... it’s difficult to digest.”

Police have not identified a motive for Wednesday’s crash. The case returns to court on Feb. 17.

<https://torontosun.com/news/national/no-warning-signs-neighbours-of-accused-shocked-by-quebec-daycare-crash>

Le **Charlevoisien**

Nouvelles

Chronique

Horizon

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Pierre Ny St-Amand. Photo Facebook

Here I go again risking being classed as a kook, but anyone who thinks psychiatry / psychology, even biology / ethology, can explain all things about human behavior needs to reckon with phenomena like this. If M. St. Amand’s Cambodian heritage is not over-looked, and SE Asian things like “amok” are remembered, more might well be at play here than Prozac or Risperidone can address or “psychosis” can capture. I will never forget a “depressed” Vietnamese walk-in client I once had in NE Calgary. I spoke with him through a Vietnamese interpreter who self-identified as “schizophrenic.” I doubt I understood the client, or left his friend impressed with Western “theory of the person” ways. TJB