

NEWS | SCHOOLS

Abducted girl's mom lawyers up big-time

High-octane attorney on board

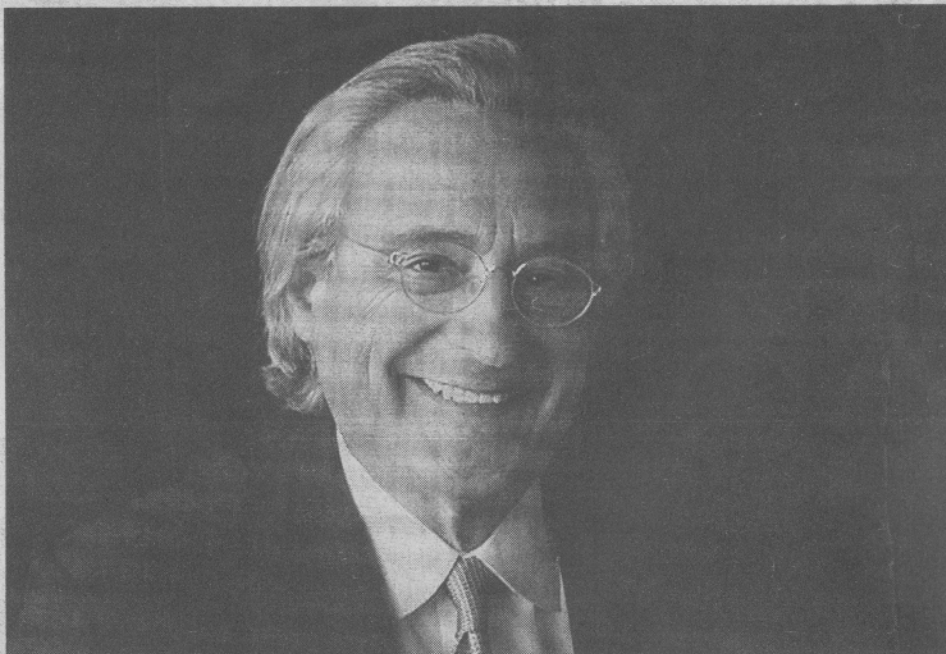
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THE MOTHER of the 5-year-old girl abducted from her kindergarten classroom at Bryant Elementary, in West Philadelphia, earlier this week has retained high-profile attorney Tom Kline.

Kline on Thursday told the *Daily News* that Latifah Rashid contacted him Wednesday for help in the ongoing investigation around her daughter's abduction — about which police have reported no new developments.

"She wants to turn her attention to taking care of her daughter, and so she thought that she needed help and reached out to me, and I told her that I would undertake the task," Kline said. "She ... fully wants to and needs to cooperate with this investigation. She wants to see the perpetrator or perpetrators brought to justice, and she has asked me to serve as her lawyer and her liaison and someone



Attorney Tom Kline: "She thought that she needed help and reached out to me."

ness is to ensure that the little girl is able to reintegrate back into school. Second, he said, is aiding Rashid in the criminal process to see that the girl's kidnappers are brought to justice.

"Mom and daughter won't feel safe or be safe until that happens, nor will the public," he said.

Police earlier this week said they were looking for a woman and a man in connection with the kidnapping and released descriptions of the two, along with a map of a target area around the school where they were focusing the investigation.

Kline said that he would look into the conduct of school personnel involved with the case for a possible suit against the school district, which he said "has already admitted that there were major security breaches which caused this to happen in the first

A civil suit against the district, Kline said, is last on the list for both him and Rashid.

"I don't want to put the cart before the horse," he said. "I want to make sure that the focus of everyone, including the family, here is on cooperating in the apprehension of clearly what are dangerous individuals who need to be brought to justice by the Philadelphia authorities."

Kline has won several big-money cases, including a \$51 million verdict against SEPTA after a boy's foot was severed in an escalator.

Anyone with information in the girl's abduction is urged to call the Special Victims Unit at 215-685-3251 or 3252, or the police tip line at 215-686-TIPS (8477).