

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

Deadly U



SCENE OF A CRIME—
OR AN ACCIDENT?

"To push with both hands toward a 200-ft. drop, that's not an accident," says close friend Levi Blasdel.

THE NEWLYWED MURDER CASE

Prosecutors suspect Jordan Graham used a blindfold

When accused murderer Jordan Graham finally came clean about shoving her newlywed husband face-first off a cliff in Glacier National Park, she did so—according to freshly released court documents—while sitting knee-to-knee with her FBI interrogator. And after Agent Stacey Smiedala, with what he called a sympathetic tap on Graham's knee, assured her he'd treat her as he would his own daughter, Graham described how she and Cody Johnson argued

over their marriage and whether to trek near Glacier's treacherous Loop trail that fateful July 7: "I was afraid. I mean, there is a cliff right there." But, she continued, her husband of eight days was fearless. "He said, 'I could do this trail with a blindfold on.'" Now the question is, *Did he?*

Tucked into dueling court papers filed on Nov. 8 and Nov. 14 are riveting details of the first-degree-murder case against Graham, 22, most curious among them the revelation that prosecutors have ordered DNA testing on a piece of cloth found near

Johnson's body. The defense contends prosecutors are grabbing at straws with a "blindfold theory" that Graham, with premeditation, blindfolded Johnson, 25, before pushing him. The prosecution says the cloth "could have been a 'blindfold,' but only the defendant knows." Awaiting DNA results on the cloth, the prosecution asked that the trial be delayed, but the judge at a Nov. 15 hearing said the Dec. 9 trial date would stand. During that same hearing in Missoula, Mont., Graham unexpectedly gave a preview of her trial testimony, insisting she told the FBI that she pushed Johnson off the cliff accidentally as they scuffled—not intentionally while his back was turned, as the prosecution claims. "Cody had grabbed me, and I thought he was going to push me down," said Graham, who alleges that Johnson had a history of holding her down against her will. "My first instinct was to get him off [me]." But in the transcript of her July 16 interview with Agent Smiedala, she said she did push him face-first: "I grabbed him over and pulled and then pushed *on the back.*"

FROM CENTER: ANDREW GEIGER; MICHAEL GALLAGHER/MISSOULIAN

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WHEN LOVE TURNS, IT CAN TURN FATAL. FROM A BRIDE WHO ALLEGEDLY SHOVED HER GROOM OFF A CLIFF TO HIS DEATH, AND TWO MEN OF SCIENCE ACCUSED OF USING THEIR KNOW-HOW TO MURDER THEIR WIVES, THESE CASES PUT THE CHILL IN 'TILL DEATH DO US PART'



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Graham (leaving court) is allowed to attend church while awaiting trial.

It's those comments that haunt friends like Levi Blasdel, who has known Graham for years and played matchmaker for her and Johnson. "She just walked away as he was falling; it's a long drop, not a straight one," says Blasdel. "Maybe Cody cried out to her. Maybe he didn't. We don't know what happened because all we have is the story from somebody who has already lied to us so many times."

As she awaits trial, Graham is under house arrest at her mother's home in Kalispell, Mont., four miles from where she and Johnson had settled in a rental house after the June 29 wedding that capped their six-month engagement. Graham, in her FBI questioning, has admitted she got a case of the wedding blues shortly after their nuptials. "I was just kind of feeling like maybe... we should have waited a little bit longer," she said. The churchgoing former child-care worker says she and Johnson, a factory worker, were arguing at their home July 7 when Johnson suggested they take a drive. At Glacier, she says, she tried to explain her unhappiness with the marriage—"so that I wasn't just kinda pretending to be happy for him"—but her emotions ramped up as he responded, she says, "like he was trying to talk to a 5-year-old." That, she says, was when Johnson grabbed her arm and things got out of hand, "and he went over." Asked if she feels responsible for his death, she tells the investigator, "I did push. But it was kinda... self-defense."

None of this is solace to her and Johnson's friends. Says one who was close to the couple: "I hope the jury can see through her lies and figure out that Jordan's pieces don't fit together."

THE DAUGHTERS

"Did our father kill others? I wouldn't put it past him," says Alexis Somers (right) with sister Rachel at their mother's grave in 2011. "He's where he belongs: in jail."



THE COUPLE

Defense attorney Randall Spencer says MacNeill (with wife Michele in an undated photo) plans to appeal the high-profile verdict.



CRIMES OF A UTAH DOCTOR

Did Dr. Martin MacNeill kill others?

As the guilty verdict against her father, Martin MacNeill, was read in a hushed Provo courtroom on Nov. 9, a trembling Alexis Somers gasped a sigh of relief. "We'd been living in fear of him for so long," says Somers, 31, who along with her sister Rachel, 34, led a five-year crusade to get MacNeill prosecuted for overmedicating and then drowning their 50-year-old mother, Michele, in April 2007.

"Finally, we can breathe again," Somers says. "He's an evil man capable of doing so much damage."

While Deputy Utah County Attorney Chad Grunander said MacNeill, 57, who faces a possible life sentence, nearly got away with the "perfect murder," the former physician still has alleged crimes to account for: He faces a second trial on Feb. 4 for molesting Somers in the months following his wife's death. "A person cannot be held accountable for their

actions while they're asleep," said MacNeill, who claimed he mistook his daughter for his wife.

Even more sinister, rumors linger about other alleged crimes of the one-time Mormon Sunday-school teacher. MacNeill's arrest warrant contains an explosive claim by his former mistress Anna Osborne, 48, who said that in 2005 he confessed to the drowning death of his brother decades ago, to trying to kill his own mother and to euthanizing a patient. Utah County





investigator Jeff Robinson, who wrote the warrant, insists, "There's no doubt MacNeill's a sociopath, but we don't have hard evidence he's killed others."

Meanwhile Somers says her sisters can at least move on with their lives knowing their father will likely die in prison. Now married and herself a physician, Somers recently gave birth to twins, has a 20-month-old son and is raising younger sister Ada, 12. Sisters Elle, 20, and Sabrina, 19, attend college nearby. "We're going to focus now on happier times," says Somers. "We fought to give our mother a voice, and now finally she can be at peace."

THE PROFESSOR

Ferrante (at a July hearing) "worked to end human suffering," says a longtime friend. "These accusations are completely out of character."



CYANIDE POISONING

A professor is accused of plotting his wife's death

On April 17 Dr. Autumn Klein, a rising star in women's neurology at the University of Pittsburgh, texted her husband to tell him she was ovulating. "Perfect timing," replied Robert Ferrante, 65, who encouraged her to take an energy supplement. "Will it stimulate egg production?" responded Klein, 41, who'd been trying for a second child. Ferrante, a neuroscience researcher specializing in Lou Gehrig's disease, replied with a smiley face. That night, after drinking the white substance, Klein suddenly collapsed. Three days later she was dead. The cause? Cyanide—a poison detectives say Ferrante ordered from his lab and, shockingly, added to her drink. But Ferrante insists he's an innocent man. "He's devastated not only for his wife's death but being accused of it," says Ferrante's attorney William Difenderfer.

To many who knew them, the couple had a perfect life. "There was nothing to suggest they were anything but a happy couple with



THE DOCTOR

Autumn Klein "was a national expert in obstetrics," a colleague says.

a beautiful little daughter," says one neighbor. But according to court papers, a source told police Klein planned to leave her "controlling" husband because he didn't support her career or their daughter Cianna, 6. Police also say Ferrante accused his wife of having an affair, and they suggest her in vitro treatments may have caused financial strain. Whatever may unfold at Ferrante's future trial, Klein's friend Irene Klotz says, "Autumn was the last person on Earth who deserved to die like this."