

Treatment of elderly mother raises couple’s hackles

DEAR ABBY: I have been happily married for 30 years. Unfortunately, my wife’s family (two older sisters and her mother, who is 97) have rejected not only me, but now my wife. While our relationship with my mother-in-law is cordial, our relationship with her sisters is poor. Recently, her sisters put their mother into an elder care facility without informing us, much less inviting us to tour the facility. By the time we found out, the paperwork had already been signed. The facility is two hours away from where she had been living



DEAR ABBY

(closer to the oldest sister), meaning my MIL will be forced to give up her social life and her doctors of 30-plus years. (She lived in a big city, so finding a facility near her apartment would have been easy.) Starting anew is hard at any age. My mother-in-law says she’s depressed about this. It is unclear whether she was competent to make this decision, but litigation seems futile and out of our budget. Ranting at my wife’s sisters would be a waste of time, but sitting here in silent anger is untenable as well. I guess we are looking for validation that it is reasonable to be angry, even if we don’t act on that anger, unless you have better advice for this situation. — **UPSET IN**

PENNSYLVANIA DEAR UPSET: I will assume that your sister-in-law has power of attorney for your mother-in-law, who has reached the point that she needs an increasing amount of care. By age 97, it stands to reason that most of her friends have passed on. It makes sense that she would be moved into assisted living close enough that your sisters-in-law could see her often. While it would have been nice had your wife been kept in the loop about the move, her relationship with her sisters isn’t cordial. You both are entitled to your feelings about what has happened, but please don’t let it rule your lives. **DEAR ABBY:** Recently, our

good friends of 35 years, “Cherise” and “Robert,” announced the upcoming wedding of their daughter. Our children grew up together. Invitations have not been sent out, but they have let us know the date and location of the destination wedding. My husband and I will go, but my children won’t be able to make it because of their jobs, kids, etc. Cherise called me today, very upset, to tell me how hurt she is. Abby, our children went their separate ways 20 years ago. They never see each other! My son had planned a destination wedding five years ago (which didn’t happen because of COVID), and Cherise’s entire family declined, which I completely understood.

I’m confused about why her reaction was so strong. I’m not telling my children about this because they will feel bad. Should I let this go? — **THROWN IN OREGON DEAR THROWN:** Yes, let it go. Your children are adults and have their own priorities. You can’t control them, nor should you try. I’m sorry Cherise is upset, but your children are not responsible for it. The “kids” are not as close as she assumed they were, and she is going to have to learn to accept that. *Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

JAMIE ALLEN TRIAL | DAY 2

Shooting victim’s blood not found on accused’s clothes

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SIoux CITY — A DNA analyst noted and tested several stains on the clothing Jamie Allen was wearing the day his wife was shot and killed, but Stacey Allen’s blood was not detected on any of the areas in question.



Of the all the stains tested on a shirt, jeans and shoes, just one tested positive for blood, said Sabrina Seehafer, a DNA analyst at the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation crime lab. That one positive result showed the blood was Jamie Allen’s. Stacey Allen’s blood was not found on any of her husband’s clothing items, Seehafer testified Thursday.

Allen, 50, has pleaded not guilty of first-degree murder for the May 10, 2024, shooting death of 47-year-old Stacey Allen in the back yard of their home at 1901 Granite Ave. in Onawa, Iowa. Law enforcement officers who responded to Jamie Allen’s 911 call reporting the shooting found him crying and kneeling over his wife’s body, which had a single gunshot wound in the chest. “He was asking us to help her,” Monona County Sheriff’s Deputy Kalvin Schumacher-Hinrickson said on the second day of testimony in Allen’s trial in Woodbury County District Court, where the



Defense attorney Tiffany Kragnes puts her hand on Jamie Allen’s shoulder while listening to a recording of a 911 call during the first day of his first-degree murder trial Wednesday. Allen, 50, has pleaded not guilty of first-degree murder for the May 10, 2024, shooting death of his wife, Stacey Allen, in Onawa, Iowa. **TIM HYNDS, SIoux CITY JOURNAL**

trial has been moved after District Judge Zachary Hindman, who is presiding over the case, determined Allen could not receive a fair trial in Monona County. Schumacher-Hinrickson said a 12-gauge shotgun was found about 15 feet from Stacey Allen’s body, and he photographed it and secured it as evidence. The gun was later found to have a fired shell in one chamber and an unfired shell in the second chamber. Kristin Hart, a DCI criminalist who analyzed the gun, said testing showed the fired shell

provided to her was fired by the shotgun. Wadding from a test-fired shell also was similar to the wadding removed from Stacey Allen’s body, Hart said. No DNA profiles could be developed from the two shells removed from the gun, Seehafer said, a result that was not surprising because skin cells usually don’t stick to the smooth surfaces on ammunition and can be shaken loose when the gun is fired. Hart said the gun was in working condition, and the trigger must be pulled for it to fire. Asked

by defense counsel about accidental firings, Hart said on the gun in this case, the trigger still would need to be pulled in some fashion for it to fire. Jurors on Wednesday had heard Jamie Allen’s distraught call to 911 in which he said he’d shot his wife, but he hadn’t meant to do so. Because the prosecution’s scheduled witness for Thursday afternoon was sick, the trial concluded for the day before noon. The trial will not be in session Friday or Monday and is scheduled to resume Tuesday.

New date set for Sioux City cold case murder trial

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SIoux CITY — A murder case that’s stretched out more than 40 years is now scheduled to go to trial this summer. District Judge Tod Deck rescheduled Thomas Popp’s murder trial for Aug. 11 in Woodbury County District Court. Popp, 63, has pleaded not guilty of first-degree murder for the 1983 death of Terri McCauley. Popp had been scheduled to go to trial Feb. 17, but public defender John Loos last month asked for a continuance because he needed more time to prepare for trial. Two of his expert witnesses had not yet completed their work or submitted



Popp

reports, Loos told Deck during a January hearing. Woodbury County Attorney James Loomis had resisted the request for a continuance, saying the McCauley family should not have to keep waiting for closure. Deck granted the continuance, saying that denying the defense time to adequately prepare for trial could lead to further delays and even a retrial if Popp was found guilty in February and later granted a retrial if an appeals court found his right to a fair trial had been

denied because his defense wasn’t given enough time to work on his case. McCauley, 18, was last seen alive getting into a white Chevy Nova in a Sioux City parking lot in the early morning of Sept. 26, 1983. A man walking his dog found McCauley’s partially clothed and decomposed body more than a week later on Oct. 6 near 33rd and Pavonia streets. Investigators determined McCauley had been shot in the face with a 20-gauge shotgun. Three months later, police connected a white Chevy Nova, a 20-gauge shotgun and other evidence to establish a suspect in McCauley’s case. Though circumstantial evidence seemed to point to the Nova’s

driver, a search of the vehicle produced no proof McCauley had been inside it. Prosecutors decided against proceeding with charges against the original suspect at the time because they wanted more concrete evidence that could help ensure a conviction. That evidence never was developed. Years later, police resubmitted DNA evidence to a laboratory in hopes DNA technology advances would provide new leads, but it did not. A Woodbury County grand jury indicted Popp last January. He was arrested in Washington and returned to Woodbury County in March. Authorities have not said what evidence linked Popp to McCauley’s death.

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