

WELL FESTED

An A to Z of acts, but is Hong Kong ready for them all?

LIFE C5



A HIGHER BATH

Revolution in the smallest room

HOMES C7



CULTURE SHOCK

Disney adjusts to the Chinese way of touring

NEWS A6



Nancy Kissel jailed for life

The verdict is murder, the jury unanimous. For Robert Kissel's father, justice has been served; for the killer's mother, just tears

Polly Hui and Barclay Crawford

Nancy Kissel was sentenced to life in prison yesterday after seven jurors unanimously found her guilty of murdering her husband after one of Hong Kong's most sensational trials.

The 41-year-old mother of three was expressionless in the dock as guards put her in handcuffs and escorted her to a prison van after Justice Michael Lunn passed sentence. Her mother, Jean McGlothlin, and friends broke down in court.

After eight hours of deliberation, the grave-looking jurors entered the courtroom about 8.30pm, to return an unanimous verdict of murder.

Sentencing Kissel, Mr Justice Lunn thanked the jurors for sitting with patience and care through the "gruesome details of the circumstances in which Robert Kissel met his death" in a trial that almost

the activities she embarked on to cover up her crime.

William Kissel, the victim's 77-year-old father who flew from Florida to attend the trial, said after the verdict: "Justice has been served. Am I sad? Yes, I lost my son. My son is resting in peace now. All the allegations against him have been proven false. The jury, after a three-month trial, in half a day, declared her guilty of murder.

"Rob was a wonderful father. He tried his best to be a wonderful husband and I just wished that his children could go on with their lives knowing the beauty of their father and how much he loved them.

"One doesn't stand up in court and accuse one's husband of all these horrible events because at the same time you do that, you are condemning your own children, your grandchildren and great-grandchildren."

Kissel's mother, Jean McGlothlin, who stood by her daughter every day in court, held back tears as she said to a crowd of journalists: "Mostly I would like to say thank you for the respect you have shown me and my family. Except for photographers, you have all been wonderful. It's helped me enormously ... I am trying to get my feet on the ground."

She refused to say whether an appeal would be lodged. The simmering feud between the camps of Robert and Nancy Kissel boiled over into a public slanging match as they waited for the verdict.

As William Kissel was telling reporters about what he termed the "terrible legacy" his daughter-in-law had left for her children, Nancy Kissel's adviser, former journalist Jim Laurie, said she should be allowed to see her children.



Nancy Kissel is driven from court to begin her life sentence. Jurors were thanked for bearing the "gruesome details" of her crime. Photo: Robert Ng

Mr Laurie, a lecturer in journalism at the University of Hong Kong, suggested the children's financial security would be threatened if Robert's brother Andrew, who is facing embezzlement charges in the US, won custody of the children.

Mr Kissel lashed out at the defence's tactic of portraying his son as a sodomist, cocaine addict and

alcoholic. "You don't know him [just] because you lived in the same building," he said to Mr Laurie.

"What puts you in a position to judge?" Mr Laurie replied it was "impossible to know what happened" in the relationship.

Mr Kissel shot back: "Are you going to write a book now ... and say Nancy is innocent?"

The judge also ordered transcripts and statements on the withholding of the baseball bat by the defence for 18 months to be sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Mr Justice Lunn said in his summing up yesterday morning that the court had heard nothing about the defence keeping the baseball bat – allegedly used by the deceased to

beat his wife – until July 21. He said that Simon Clark, the defence solicitor who was in court throughout the trial, had been keeping the bat since finding it in the bedroom of Kissel's flat in November 9, 2003.

"What became of the baseball bat during the period between November 9, 2003, and July 21, 2005? We knew nothing about it at all."

New Orleans survivors ordered out

Shattered New Orleans will be cleared of all survivors as authorities battle to wrest control of the streets from armed looters in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. With the death toll now expected to be in the thousands, the US is launching its biggest-ever military



response to a natural disaster. Martial law has been declared and up to 30,000 National Guard troops mobilised. US President George W. Bush will tour the devastated Gulf coast region, stung by criticism that he has been too slow to visit the disaster zone. **Reports – A12, A13**

Cancer chemical in saltwater fish

Wellcome supermarkets withdraw the popular saltwater fish green grouper from sale after a sample believed to be from Taiwan tested positive for the cancer-causing chemical malachite green. The withdrawal comes as mainland supplies of freshwater fish resume and Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food York Chow Yat-ngok apologises for the inaccurate information on farms designated by the mainland to supply Hong Kong. **Reports – A5**

"Justice has been served. Am I sad? Yes, I lost my son"

William Kissel
Victim's father

lasted three months. He exempted them from jury service for the next 15 years and granted them the maximum additional allowance of \$280 a day for performing their duty.

Michigan-born Kissel was arrested five days after she drugged Robert Kissel, a senior Merrill Lynch banker, with a milkshake and bludgeoned him to death with a heavy lead ornament in their luxurious Parkview flat on November 2, 2003. She arranged for workmen to carry the victim's body, concealed in an old oriental rug, to her storeroom.

Prosecutor Peter Chapman said during the trial that Kissel killed her husband in a "cold-blooded" murder to escape a "messy, lengthy" divorce and be with Michael Del Priore, her TV-repairman lover who lived in a trailer park in Vermont.

Defence counsel Alexander King SC claimed Kissel had been subjected to five years of forceful anal sex and physical assault by a husband who abused cocaine and searched for gay porn websites. Kissel told the court her husband had threatened to kill her with a baseball bat and that she had almost no memory of

INSIDE



A month before murdering her husband, Nancy Kissel seemed glamorous and happy, in contrast to her trial appearance. Read about the two faces of Nancy Kissel



REPORTS ON A2-A4

■ **the trial** The full story behind Robert Kissel's murder and the sensational trial that led to his wife's conviction

■ **the victim** Robert Kissel was an outgoing guy popular with girls. How did he come to meet his wife on a singles cruise?

■ **the lover** We reveal the Vermont TV repairman who stole Nancy Kissel's heart months before the murder

TOMORROW: THE KISSELS' LAST DAYS TOGETHER

Chopped boy's stepmother arrested

Benjamin Wong and Martin Wong

Shum Ho-yin's father stood by his wife last night after the severely injured seven-year-old's stepmother was arrested with seven others over the chopping attack on the youngster last week.

"My wife is very harmless. I do not believe she would do such a thing," Shum Wai-sing said.

He was speaking after police arrested six suspects in Hong Kong, including the stepmother, and two in Shenzhen – and as police said the attack on the boy by two chopper-wielding men last Thursday stemmed from family disputes.

Top government officials including Chief Executive Donald Tsang Yam-kuen, Secretary for Security Ambrose Lee Siu-kuong and Police Commissioner Dick Lee Ming-kuai praised the detectives' handling of the case. Mr Lee delivered a special message from Mr Tsang to the inves-

tigators' Ma On Shan base yesterday. Police last night had not disclosed the name of the stepmother or the other arrested people – six men and another woman.

"My wife has become quite quiet recently but I still do not think she is involved," Mr Shum said, adding that Ho-yin's relationship with his stepmother was "not bad".

"Ho-yin calls her big sister," he said. "And once I asked whether he would like her to become his mother, he replied 'yes'."

Meanwhile Ho-yin's natural mother, Lam Yuet-ming, said she hoped she would be able to spend more time with the boy, who has lived with his grandmother since his parents separated.

Ms Lam said she was discussing the boy's future with social workers.

"We will follow Ho-yin's own decision," she said. "I will spend more time with Ho-yin in the future. I wanted to do it in the past but I just



Shum Ho-yin's stepmother is taken into custody. Photo: SCMP Picture

could not do so because of my work."

Senior Superintendent Chan Kwok-keung, head of the New Territories South Regional crime wing, said the investigation had ruled out

the possibility that the attack was triad or debt-related. "We firmly believe this case was the result of a family problem and related disputes."

A source said this could include Ho-yin's behaviour towards his six-month-old stepbrother.

Mr Chan said the arrested people, aged 16 to 48, included the suspected mastermind, middleman, two alleged attackers, both teenagers, and a taxi driver alleged to have transported them. All remained in custody last night.

Apart from the stepmother, none of the other persons were related to Ho-yin. Two of the eight, including one of the suspected hitmen, had fled to Shenzhen and were arrested at a restaurant and residence there.

China News Service said one of the men arrested in Shenzhen was believed to be the stepmother's former boyfriend.

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