

NEWS > CRIME & PUBLIC SAFETY

Packed courtroom as Karen Read defense team pushes for more on Boston cop's death



Karen Read, who is accused of killing her boyfriend Boston Police Officer John O'Keefe, is swarmed as she leaves Norfolk Superior Court in Dedham yesterday. (Nancy Lane/Boston Herald)

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In front of a jam-packed courtroom, defense attorneys for the Mansfield woman accused of killing her Boston Police officer boyfriend squared off with prosecutors over who's really to blame.

They are demanding a slew of evidence they say will show their client is innocent, but they will have to wait for a judge to decide what happens next.

It all hit the boiling point Wednesday as Karen Read, 43, charged with second-degree murder, motor vehicle manslaughter while under the influence of alcohol and leaving the scene of a collision causing death, was back in Norfolk Superior Court in Dedham.

She's accused of the Jan. 29, 2022, killing of her boyfriend, Boston Police Officer John O'Keefe, 46, of Canton.

Read, who has been out on bail since her initial arraignment in Stoughton District Court just days after O'Keefe's body was discovered — “cold to the touch” as prosecutor Adam [Lally's most recent filing described it](#) — outside 34 Fairview Road in Canton, a home owned by Brian Albert, [one of the two people Read's attorneys have pointed to as being culpable](#) in O'Keefe's death.

The simmering feud between defense attorneys David Yannetti and Alan Jackson and prosecutor Lally that has played out in blistering motions and responses [since the middle of last month](#) came to the fore in court as they argued their cases before Superior Court Judge Beverly Cannone. The courtroom was packed perhaps 100-strong with members of the public who have taken interest in the case on either side.

Cannone heard arguments in the hour-long hearing but did not rule on the two discovery motions.

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While additional motions have been made, the hearing Wednesday asked specifically for video surveillance from the Canton Public Library, the clothing O’Keefe was wearing the night he died, evidence seized from Read’s Lexus SUV prosecutors say delivered the killing blow and, finally, trace evidence from the wounds O’Keefe suffered — which defense attorneys argue could contain DNA evidence that shows the homeowner’s dog took part in a deadly attack on O’Keefe.

It was this last point that illustrated the two warring theories over O’Keefe’s death. The “undisputed facts,” as Jackson — an L.A. lawyer best known for effectively defending actor Kevin Spacey in Nantucket in 2019 — put them are that, one, O’Keefe was found dead that early morning in the Albert’s front yard and, two, his body “had this set of wounds on his right arm.

Jackson displayed a large post-mortem photo in court of O’Keefe’s right arm showing those scars.

Jackson and Yannetti say the state looks at these wounds as “roadrash” — a fact Lally strongly disputes, calling it a “strawman argument,” adding the state has never described them that way.

The defense countered that an expert says these are defense wounds from an animal attack. Specifically, they argue, O’Keefe was beaten to death in the Fairview home by a party including its homeowner, Albert — who they describe as a “known fighter” and boxer — and that his “90-pound” German Shepherd Chloe contributed to the attack on O’Keefe as dogs would do when their owners are in a fight.

They further state that the dog has since been re-homed “mysteriously,” and that the flooring has been changed in the basement and that the home has been sold — property records say it sold on April 10 for \$905,000 and had been listed for sale last November.

Lally said that the defense’s requests were “the epitome of a fishing expedition” — Jackson countered that it’s only one in so far as they have “the fish on the hook” — and that for a lot of the material he has been waiting on communication from them.



Karen Read looks on at a photo of the wounds on her dead boyfriend's arm are shown in court. (Nancy Lane/Boston Herald)



Karen Read (Nancy Lane/Boston Herald)

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Flint McColgan is the police and courts reporter for the Boston Herald. He previously worked covering politics in Pennsylvania and breaking news and government in North Dakota starting in 2012. He also serves as the news editor on Saturdays. Before journalism, he supported himself as an occasionally successful roving pool player in the Midwest and southwest.

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