

Alleged Kustok Murder Weapon Powerful Enough to Bring Down a Bear

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Allan Kustok gave his wife a .357 Magnum for their 33rd wedding anniversary. Built to give police officers more firepower, even to shoot through an engine block, the gun is the suspected murder weapon in Jeanie Kustok's death.

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Allan Kustok usually talked about his kids or the weather. Whenever Allan ran into Jim, a neighbor on Royal Oaks Lane, he didn't talk about work. Allan was friendly and would just talk about "everyday stuff," Jim said.

"I'd ask how his family was doing, he'd ask the same about mine," said Jim.

Even a week before Allan took his wife Anita "Jeanie" Kustok to Palos Community Hospital, wrapped in a bed sheet and dead from a gunshot wound to the head, Jim said he couldn't see anything different about the man.

Allan is charged with first-degree murder in Jeanie's death, accused of firing a bullet from a Smith and Wesson .357 Magnum into his wife of 34 years. He's scheduled to appear in court Monday for a hearing.

"It would be shocking if this happened anywhere, but especially here," Jim said.

Here is a sleepy Orland Park street with 13 homes flanked by a horse farm to the west and prairie hills and trees stretching in every other direction. While close to \$700,000 in value, the brick Kustok house at 10932 Royal Oaks Lane is modest and simple compared to the winding stairs, giant doors and castle-like facades of other homes on the street.

A weapon like the .357 seems an unlikely companion in the Kustok household. Within the house and in the community, Kustok family life seemed to revolve around the kids and sports.

Both Zak and Sarah Kustok have said athletics were never pushed on them, but they were standout athletes at Sandburg High School. Zak led the Eagles as quarterback to an 11-0 season his junior year. He also was a standout point guard before breaking records as Northwestern University's quarterback.

Sarah played varsity for all four of her years as a Sandburg Eagle, both in basketball and volleyball. At DePaul University, she became one of the team's greatest captains and later an assistant coach while earning a master's degree. Now a Comcast SportsNet reporter, Sarah Kustok was just honored by [DePaul Magazine as one of its "14 under 40" stars](#).

Their mom, Jeanie Kustok, 58, was a beloved teacher of gifted students at Central Elementary School in Riverside. With a magnetic personality, she made her students and faculty feel comfortable and special, her full attention focused on whomever she was speaking with at the moment. Sarah recalled her mother's banana bread at the [Oct. 7 memorial service](#), which she would bake in abundance for Zak's Northwestern family and her DePaul comrades.

But Allan — who a year ago bought Jeanie a curious gift for their 33rd anniversary, a Smith and Wesson .357 Magnum Model 65 handgun — his tale doesn't quite fit the storybook suburban life witnessed by many friends and neighbors.

Outside of his own collegiate athletic career and his involvement in those of his children, a history of failed businesses and job-hopping trails "Big" Al Kustok to the present day. [Multiple mortgages were taken out on the nearly \\$700,000 house](#) before he was forced to take a \$46,000-a-year job for three years as a Cook County Jail sanitarian. After the jail job, he worked as a medical supply salesman for two different companies.

As neighbors said, he didn't talk much about work, mostly his family.

Allan, 59, may have been carrying on a five-year affair with a woman and visiting Internet swingers clubs, though Orland Park police and the Cook County State's Attorney's office haven't confirmed either report.

But it appears life for Allan and Jeanie Kustok wasn't what it seemed.

Allan claims he awoke in his bedroom to a gunshot on Sept. 29 and found Jeanie lying dead, arms across her chest, that 2.5-pound gun still in her hand.

The Cook County Medical Examiner's office said a bullet passed through Jeanie's right cheek, and the 4-inch gun barrel was likely a few inches away from her face when it was fired. After autopsy, her death was ruled a homicide, and the medical examiner determined Jeanie could not have fired the fatal shot into her left cheek, accidentally or otherwise.

"I found it striking that, according to him, she was lying on her back with her arms crossed and a weapon of significant power and weight was still in her right hand," said Peter Troy, the Cook County assistant state's attorney prosecuting Allan. "We continue to investigate all of the circumstances surrounding the domestic relations of defendant and his late wife."

While Troy hasn't discussed the case he's building against Allan Kustok, the prosecution almost certainly will delve into forensic evidence involving the fatal shot and the weapon itself.

Smith and Wesson describes the .357 Magnum as a gun anyone can shoot accurately. The first .357 was built in 1935 to be a more powerful option for law enforcement over the .38 Special revolver.

"In that period, law enforcement wanted a gun that could stop a car by shooting through an engine block," said Roy Jinks, an official Smith and Wesson historian. "(The .357) was a super-powerful gun. A major breakthrough. It was the one that opened the door to high-powered handguns."

The Model 65, made of blue stainless steel, was first made in the 1970s for the New York State Police, Jinks said. Bullets specifically made for the .357 Magnum can be used for hunting small-to-medium-sized game: deer, wild boar, even bears. The gun can be made with custom barrel lengths, from 2 inches to 8 inches. The longer the barrel, the more force gathers behind the bullet.

Fred Lutger, owner of Freddie Bear Sports in Tinley Park, said shooting the .357 accurately requires two hands.

"That way you are holding the weight with both arms," Lutger said. "You'll hold it a lot steadier that way."

Allan told police he grabbed the gun after he saw Jeanie lying dead and pointed the weapon at his own head before firing the remaining five rounds into an armoire. But that fatal first shot from his unusual anniversary gift will be the one most discussed when Allan Kustok finally goes to trial.

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