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SHERIFF: MOLLY DID THE REAL DAMAGE

As both face long jail terms, was ex-FBI agent dad just covering up for his killer daughter?

THE senior detective who led the inquiry into Jason Corbett's killing has said his wife Molly struck the lethal blow with a brick.

Davidson County Sheriff

From **Catherine Fegan** in North Carolina

David Grice has told the Irish Daily Mail that while Ms Martens' father Tom confessed to the killing, 'the brick did the most damage'.

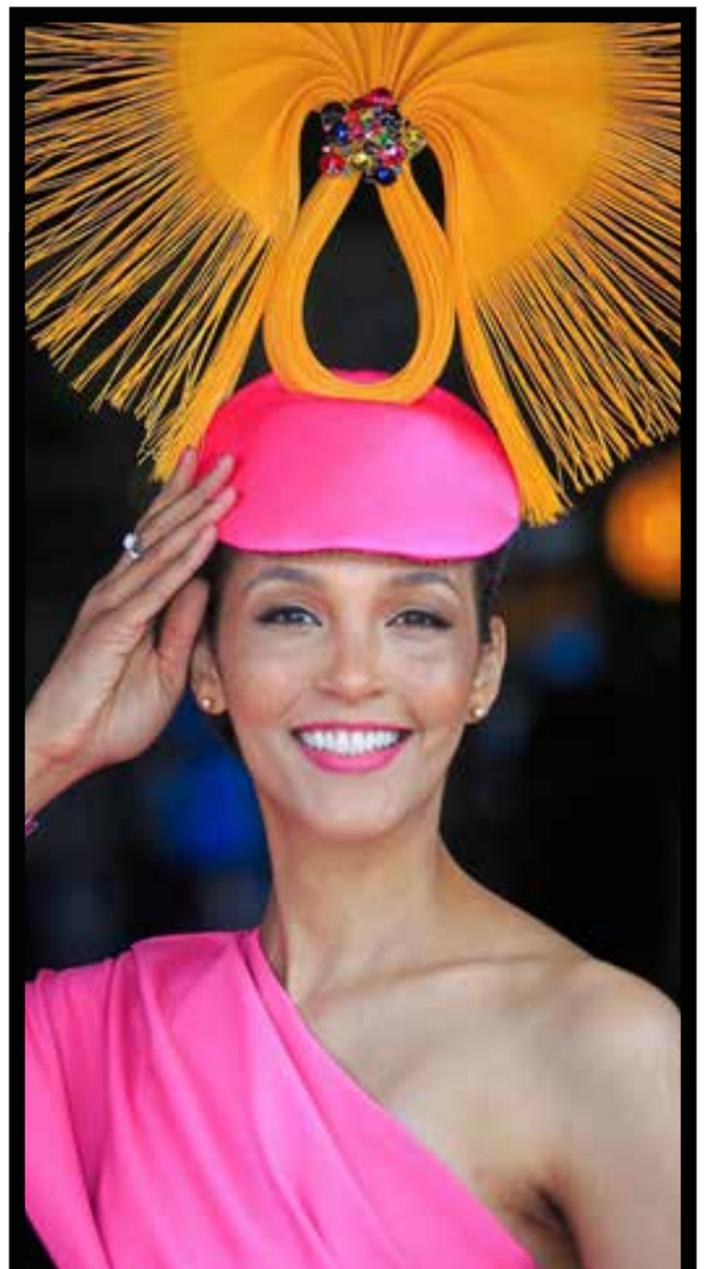
And he added that he believes

Ms Martens had first 'agitated' her husband – and then called her father for help.

His revelations add to prosecution arguments that Mr Martens used his FBI training to cover up for his daughter's deadly attack on her husband.

In a detailed interview with this

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A bright idea for the horse show

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MOLLY MARTENS TRIAL

She agitated Jason

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newspaper, Sheriff Grice also reveals that, despite claims that Tom Martens had covered up for his wife Sharon's knowledge of the killing, his spouse would not face charges. However, he said both father and daughter would have to serve at least 80% of their 20-to-25-year jail terms, under North Carolina law.

Jury foreman Tom Aamland also spoke to the Mail and told how jurors met and hugged the Corbett family, after the verdict – and revealed what went on in the jury room.

Sheriff Grice, who was in charge of the detective unit that led the inquiry, said: 'The brick did the most damage. The coup de grâce was the brick, the brick that Tom never saw his daughter swinging.'

In his evidence, Mr Martens had claimed he didn't see Molly hit her husband with the brick.

Both were convicted of the second-degree murder of Limerick man Jason, on Wednesday, and sentenced to terms of 20 to 25 years in prison.

The senior detective said: 'I think she agitated him [Jason] into arguing with her and then rang Daddy to tell him to come down. What we can't reconcile is the quick trip to North Carolina. Tom Martens wasn't an impulsive man. He had to be back in work on Monday.'

He said it was a five-hour trip to the Corbett house from Mr Martens' Tennessee home and that Tom and Sharon didn't arrive at the house until 8.30pm on the Saturday night before the killing.

'Did she call him up and say, "He's on a tirade, come down here"? We will never know,' he said.

Sheriff Grice visited the scene just hours after the killing in August 2015

'I knew things didn't add up'

and said he immediately knew they were dealing with a murder case.

'I knew straight away things didn't add up,' he said. 'I walked in there and I knew we had a lot of activity in that house because of the concentration of where the blood was. We started out with questions about whether or not this was self-defence. The brutality of the crime clearly presented itself as something else.'

'If he was an FBI agent and he was defending his daughter then why didn't he attempt to restrain Jason, to bring him down somehow, leave the house, shout out for Sharon?'

He explained that they only took one statement from Mr Martens as part of a strategy. He said: 'He had confessed. What else could he say?' And he added: 'I don't think Tom Martens ever thought he would be charged.' And while it was alleged Tom Martens covered up his wife's knowledge of what happened that night, the sheriff said: 'At this point she is not a person of interest.'

However, the parole system no longer exists in North Carolina, and he said: 'Molly and her father will have to serve 85% of the term. No early releases, no parole, no visitors for at least three to four months.'

Meanwhile, jury foreman Mr Aamland told the Mail that Jason's two children were foremost in their minds during deliberations.

He said: 'The children came up in discussions. The fact that they are now orphans. It was an extremely difficult decision for us all. Everyone was very emotional and there were tears shed in the jury room as we went through it all.'

'Even when I signed the verdict record forms, I knew I was changing lives forever and that is a big burden



The jury foreman: Tom Aamland

'I tried to hit him with brick'

STATEMENT OF MOLLY MARTENS (AS SHOWN TO JURORS DURING TRIAL)

'MY husband Jason Corbett was upset that he awoke and an argument ensued with him telling me to "shut up".'

'He applied pressure to my throat/neck and started choking me.'

'At some point, I screamed as loud as possible.'

'He covered my mouth and then started choking me again with his arm.'

'My father, Tom Martens, came in the room.'

'I cannot remember if he said something or just hit Jason to get him off me.'

'Jason grabbed the bat from him and I tried to hit him with a brick garden paver I had on my nightstand.'

'I do not remember anything after that.'

to have on your shoulders. But I know we did the right thing.'

And he revealed that he and several other jurors met members of the Corbett family on Wednesday night.

'Those of us who could went to meet the family in a hotel,' he said. 'They hugged each and every one of us and thanked us for reaching the verdict. It was very emotional for everyone but we were glad to have that chance to talk. They met us with open arms.'

On reaching their verdict, he said: 'We were confident with Tom, but we had more difficulty with Molly. The night before the verdict we had all settled on second-degree murder for Tom but two jurors wanted manslaughter for Molly. Then they went home and slept on it and came back the next day with a different outlook. No-one coerced them, they came to the decision themselves. For me, it was the fact that Molly had tissue and blood on her clothes. I told the other jurors that my theory was she had been kneeling over Jason when she hit him. She had to have been.'

'Tom had already admitted to participating so we had no choice. He had to take the hit. Whether he covered up for her or did the damage himself, we don't know.'

'We all found his testimony wasn't believable. He didn't come across as being honest and he had an air of arrogance in the box.'

catherine.fegan@daily mail.ie

THE TRAIL OF BLOOD AND HATRED

OVER the course of almost two weeks of evidence, jurors in the trial of Molly Martens and her father, former FBI agent Tom Martens, were shown over 200 exhibits and heard testimony from 23 witnesses. From the opening day, when the 911 call was played to jurors, to the dramatic testimony of Tom Martens, the trial was full of shocking revelations. Now that verdicts have been returned, we take you through the main pieces of evidence revealing, in detail, how Jason Corbett was killed.

THE 911 CALL

PROSECUTORS said the female dispatcher who took an emergency call from Mr Martens in the early hours of August 2, 2015, did not believe he or his daughter were trying to administer CPR to Jason. On the date in question, Mr Martens made a 911 call from the Corbett family home at 3.05am and said there had been an argument between the victim and Ms Martens. The



call lasted 14 minutes and 27 seconds. Over half of it is taken up with the dispatcher instructing Ms Martens and her father on how to administer CPR. Before the 911 operator was allowed to testify to jurors, lawyers for Mr Martens moved to prevent her 'comments' being heard in court. In response, Assistant District Attorney Ina Stanton said: 'She [the witness] was of the opinion that they were not actually doing CPR.'

During her testimony on the first day of evidence, Karen Capps said that Tom Martens had been 'surprisingly calm' during the call.

She added that after he had performed the first 200 pumps as was required, he 'was not out of breath'.

'He didn't sound like most people performing CPR,' she told the court.

'There was no panting, no gasping. He wasn't out of breath.' Molly Martens performed two sets of 200 pumps, she said.

'How was her demeanour?' asked Ms Stanton. 'She was very tearful,' said the witness. 'A little excited, I

suppose you could say. She counted, but she counted like she was yelling.'

'She wanted to make sure that I heard her counting.' The state would later contend, in closing speeches, that Mr Martens and his daughter had 'faked' giving CPR to Mr Corbett. Furthermore, the lawyers argued Mr Martens had delayed calling 911 immediately because he was busy 'concocting his story'.

AUTOPSY REPORT

ON Day Two of the evidence, the jurors were shown graphic photographs taken during the post-mortem examination of Mr Corbett's body.

The images were so unsettling in nature that one juror had to be removed from the court and was physically sick into a bin.

Dr Craig Nelson, a forensic pathologist at the office of the chief medical examiner in North Carolina, told the court that he had identified ten different 'impact sites' on Jason's head. Two featured evidence of 'repeated blows'. He couldn't say how many times.

Photographs showed pieces of scalp that had become detached from the skull and connective tissue.

'It illustrates the depth and underscores that this was a laceration and therefore a blunt force injury rather than a sharp force injury,' he told the trial.

These pieces of scalp were 'sagging and drooping with gravity,' said the witness. In Dr Nelson also noted one post-mortem blow.

The witness said that he peeled back areas of skin around the head to examine the skull further. When he did this, 'pieces of bone fell out' in two areas. This, he said, indicated that the bone had been severely fractured. Some of the 'full thickness lacerations' the blows had 'gone all the way through the scalp to the depth of the skull bone.'

THE UNEXPLAINED SEDATIVE FOUND IN JASON'S SYSTEM

AN alcohol level of 0.02% was found in Jason's blood as well as the presence of a drug called Trazodone in 'trace amounts'. The powerful drug, which is known to cause drowsiness and lack of co-ordination, had never been prescribed to Jason. However, Katie Wingate, a nurse at Kernersville Family medical practice, told the court that she had prescribed Ms Martens Trazodone in July that year. She had visited the practice complaining of foot

pain, something she had suffered from over a number of years, due to a condition that affected the blood vessels in her left foot.

She had previously been prescribed medication for sleeplessness and depression. Ms Wingate told the court that she had prescribed Trazodone tablets and had advised Ms Martens to take one a night at bedtime. In later testimony, a CVS pharmacy supervisor told the court that records showed that a prescription for Trazodone had been filed and dispensed for Ms Martens on July 30, 2015.

Lawyers for Tom Martens would later describe this as a 'red herring', arguing that because the amount of Trazodone found in Mr Corbett's system was so small, 'it had no effect on Jason Corbett'. David Freedman said: 'It has no effect on this case.'

NO INJURIES, NO TEARS

MS MARTENS refused to go to hospital for a medical examination after alleging her husband had tried to strangle her, testimony revealed. A



witness also told jurors that he saw her 'rubbing her neck in a scrubbing motion' and crying with no tears in the hours after her husband's death.

Officer David Dillard said she was placed in his patrol car for about an hour and a half after he arrived at the scene.

He was asked about her demeanour in the car during that time. 'She was making crying noises,' he said.

'But I didn't see any visible tears. 'She was rubbing her neck in a scrubbing motion,' he added. Paramedic David Bent told the court that while he was at the scene, he noticed 'light redness' on the left side of Ms Martens' neck.

He used a penlight to examine her pupils, which were normal. He found 'no abnormalities at all' and no injury, apart from the redness to the neck, above.

Mr Bent said that Ms Martens told him that she had been choked and that her neck hurt. He added that she said she felt okay and didn't want to go to