

BERGENFIELD

Murder trial of siblings accused of dismembering Bergenfield man begins

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HACKENSACK — Adrienne Smith, the woman accused of killing her husband and dismembering his remains, felt comfortable with saws and broken bones, prosecutors say.

As a surgical technologist at the Hospital for Special Surgery in Manhattan, Smith spent more than a decade sterilizing and preparing instruments for orthopedic surgeries.

Smith used skills she learned on the job to cut her husband, Randolph “Randy” Smith, into 13 pieces at their Bergenfield apartment after becoming convinced he was unfaithful, prosecutors argued Wednesday in Superior Court. She then allegedly recruited her brother, Orville Cousins, to help encase his body parts in cement.

“There’s only one person with the training and the motive to kill Randy, and that was the defendant, Adrienne Smith, and she enlisted the help of her brother to get away with it,” Assistant Prosecutor Yomara Castro said in her opening arguments.

The siblings are standing trial together after Cousins withdrew from a plea deal of eight years in prison in exchange for potentially implicating his sister in the killing and decided to join her as a co-defendant. They are charged with unlawfully desecrating human remains, unlawfully moving human remains and hindering by concealing. Smith is also charged with murder and lying to law enforcement.

She gave several explanations for Randolph Smith’s disappearance in December 2016. Smith told her husband’s cousin that he went to his truck driving job the day after Christmas and never came back, Castro said. She later told Bergenfield police, who had responded to the Smiths’ home for a welfare check, that her husband had left their home with an unknown person.

Surveillance video captured Smith and Cousins buying a reciprocating saw, blades, cement, a mixing paddle, garbage bags, gloves and other items at a Home Depot store on Dec. 26,

Castro said.

Cousins allegedly took the remains to Tuck-it-Away storage in the Bronx before deciding to move them to a childhood friend's house in Burlington. The friend, Kareem Edwards, told the jury Wednesday that he called police after he opened some of the bins and smelled "an odor I never smelled in my entire life."

The Burlington County medical examiner identified Randolph Smith by a fingerprint his severed left hand had left in the cement, Castro said. Testing of his urine and brain tissue revealed the presence of Ambien, a sedative-hypnotic that can make people drowsy, said Robert Allen Middleberg, a forensic toxicologist.

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Middleberg testified Wednesday that he believed Randolph Smith had been exposed to the drug within 24 hours of his death.

Police arrested Adrienne Smith at relative's home in New Brunswick in January 2017.

Cousins was picked up at John F. Kennedy International Airport, where he had a one-way ticket to his native Jamaica.

Frank Lucianna, one of Smith's attorneys, argued Wednesday that Smith had no motive to kill her husband. The two were married for a decade and had four children, one of them from Smith's prior relationship.

"She had ups and downs with her husband; we all do," Lucianna said. "We all have mistakes that we make."

Lucianna was nearly removed from the case in January after an outburst at Cousins' attorney during jury selection for the two-month trial.

On Wednesday, Lucianna dropped to a bended knee at the end of his opening arguments and urged the jury to consider just one question: "Did she murder her husband? Did she murder her husband? Did she murder her husband?"