

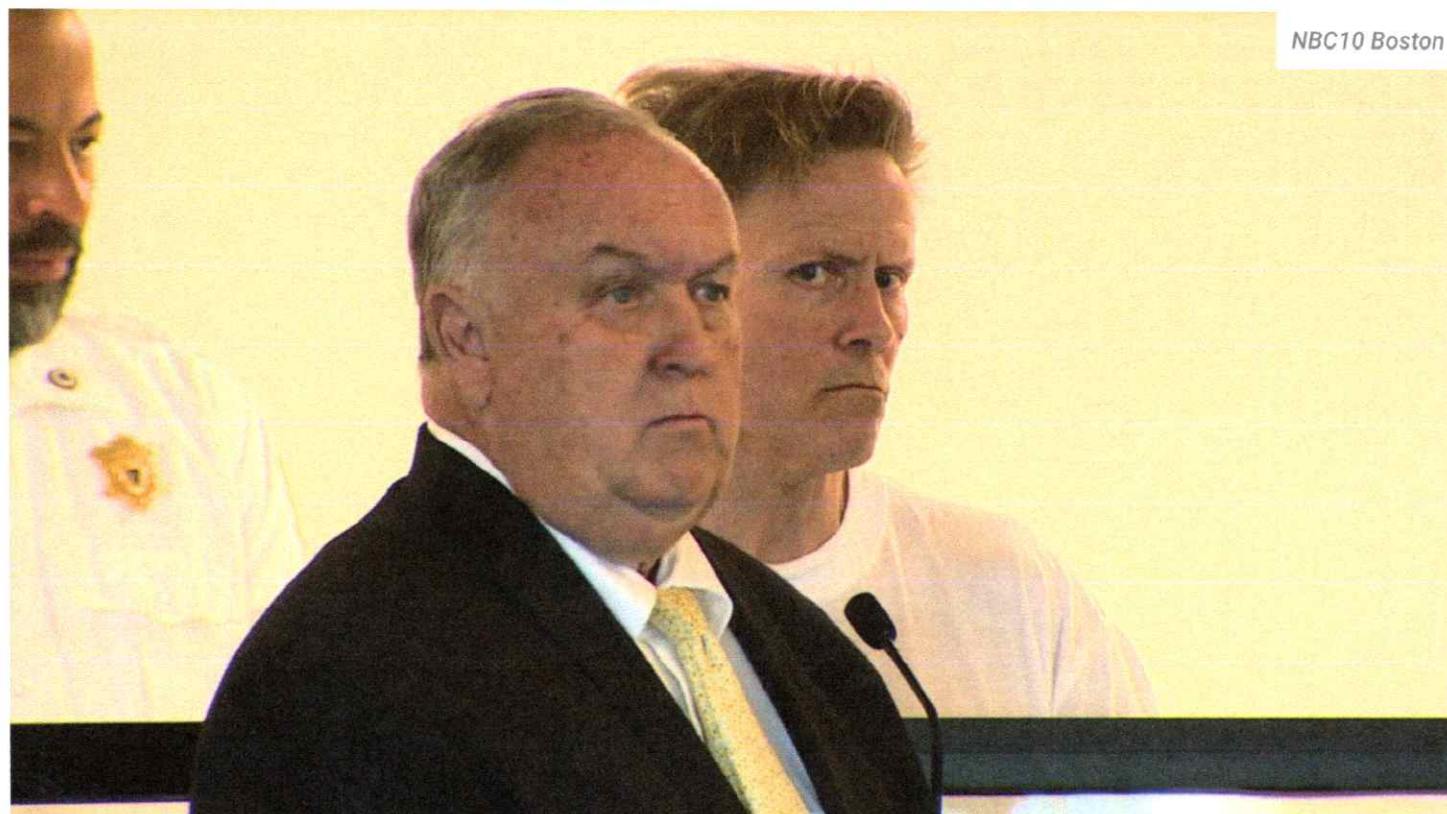


NEWTON

Man charged with beating his wife to death at Newton home back in court

Richard Hanson was held without bail on a grand jury's murder charge in the beating death of Nancy Hanson at a home in Newton in July

By **Asher Klein** • Published 3 hours ago • Updated 3 hours ago



Richard Hanson, right, in court on Thursday, Aug. 31, 2023, to face a grand jury indictment in the suspected murder of his wife, Nancy Hanson, at their home in Newton, Massachusetts, the previous month.

Richard J. Hanson, the Newton man accused of bludgeoning his wife to death in July, was arraigned Thursday on a charge of first-degree murder as new details emerged in the case.

Hanson, 64, pleaded not guilty in Middlesex Superior Court and was ordered held without bail, two weeks after he was indicted by a grand jury. He's been in custody since his district court arraignment in July.

Prosecutors allege that Hanson killed his wife, 54-year-old [Nancy M. Hanson](#), on the night of July 15 by striking her with "one or more objects," including a baseball bat, as their 17-year-old, the oldest of their three sons, frantically pleaded with him to stop.

Nancy Hanson had sought a restraining order against her husband two days before she was killed, according to authorities.

During the July arraignment, Assistant District Attorney Megan McGovern described a disturbing scene of Richard Hanson and his wife arguing upstairs while their children were downstairs. When the quarrel exploded into violence, Nancy Hanson shouted to her children to call 911, McGovern said.

The 17-year-old told the 911 dispatcher he believed "his father was hitting his mother with a baseball bat," McGovern said.

"He indicated that his parents were upstairs and he and his younger brothers, also both juveniles, were down on the first floor," McGovern said.

In court documents filed Thursday, prosecutors said Nancy Hanson was on the phone with a friend when Richard Hanson got on the line and accused his wife of cheating on him.

The friend "assured him Nancy was not cheating on him" before he hung up, prosecutors said. Nancy Hanson later called her friend back and they continued talking before the

friend heard Richard Hanson return to the room. Nancy Hanson said, “Rich, no” before the phone fell to the floor, her friend told investigators.

After a moment of silence, the friend heard loud, repeated bangs and the screams of the couple’s children, who said words to the effect of, “Dad stop, you’re killing her,” prosecutors said.

The friend called 911, and a bloodied Richard Hanson told a responding officer in the driveway that he was “sorry” and had “caught her cheating,” prosecutors said.

An autopsy noted multiple injuries to Nancy Hanson including a fractured right forearm, a compound fracture to her left forearm, rib fractures, multiple blunt force injuries to her skull, and bruising to her upper torso, officials said. The medical examiner said the cause of death was blunt force trauma.

“One of the children relayed seeing his father hitting the victim in the back and the head with a baseball bat, while a second observed the defendant sitting on the bed holding the bat while the victim was injured and unconscious on the floor,” prosecutors said.

Hanson’s lawyer, Arthur L. Kelly, filed a motion Thursday for money to hire a forensic psychologist.

Kelly sought \$5,000 to retain a psychologist to examine “the various mental health reports regarding the defendant,” according to court documents. A judge approved \$2,000.

Kelly wrote that he is seeking a “review and independent evaluation regarding the potential issue of ‘criminal responsibility.’ ”

The next hearing in the case is scheduled for Sept. 21.

Two days before the killing, Nancy Hanson had called Newton police around 2:30 p.m. and said her husband had taken her purse, laptop, and car keys and refused to give them

back. From the house, Richard Hanson told police he'd taken the items but felt he was entitled to because he was paying the bills, records show.

Less than two hours later, Nancy Hanson obtained a restraining order that required her husband to leave the home, not come within 100 yards of her, and stay away from her workplace.

Newton police officers tried to serve Richard Hanson with the restraining order at the family's home at 7:26 p.m., but Nancy Hanson told them he wasn't there and she didn't know where he was.

John F. Carmichael Jr., Newton's police chief, said officers returned to the Brookline Street home two hours later and a third time the next day around noon. Both times, Richard Hanson was gone.

Police also called Richard Hanson's phone twice the next day but he didn't return the calls, Carmichael said.

In 2021, Richard Hanson was arrested for violating a restraining order and resisting arrest, court records show. The case was resolved when he was placed on pretrial probation on the conditions he attend alcohol counseling and not attack his wife, records show.

Nancy Hanson appeared in court and agreed with the resolution, records show.

Material from prior Globe stories was used in this report. This breaking news story will be updated when more information is released.

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