



GRADE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND HER MOM KILLED AT HOME A HUSBAND'S JEALOUS RAGE?

Nine months after elementary school principal Jennifer Dupras and her mother, Cynthia Houk, were fatally shot in their Fresno, Calif., home, police arrest Jennifer's estranged husband, Alan, for murder

By SANDRA SOBIEJAJ WESTFALL and CHRISTINE PELISEK

Known for her punctuality, organization and planning skills—qualities that had served her well as principal at Washington Elementary School in Kingsburg, Calif.—Jennifer Dupras had put all the pieces of her life in place to start a new chapter. Last fall she retired from a 26-year career in education, filed for divorce to end a troubled 26-year marriage and moved into her childhood home in Fresno to savor time with her elderly mother, Cynthia Houk, 88. “Jennifer always did the right thing,” says her

friend Kelly Rosales. “She really wanted to spend quality time with her mother for as long as she could.” By December 2017 Jennifer, 55, had a new romance and just one last loose end to tie up: retrieving, with Rosales’s help, some things from the home she had shared with soon-to-be-ex-husband, Alan Dupras, 58. But Jennifer didn’t show for their Dec. 11 meeting as planned, so Rosales called police—who found Jennifer and Cynthia fatally shot inside Cynthia’s home. “It is a pretty quiet

Alan Dupras in his Sept. 25 mugshot.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: FRESNO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE; COURTESY KINGSBURG ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL; DISTRICT COURTNEY INNS GONZALES; THE FRESNO BEAN/MICHAEL RENO/COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE (3)

[IT] WAS EXTREMELY VIOLENT AND PERSONAL. THERE'S EVIDENCE IT WAS PREMEDITATED
—MARGARET MIMS, COUNTY SHERIFF

neighborhood,” says Fresno County sheriff’s office spokesman Tony Botti. “This rocked the area.”

After a nine-month investigation police are finally giving the community answers. On Sept. 25 authorities arrested Alan Dupras, charging him with two counts of murder. He has pleaded not guilty and is being held without bail. Responding to criticism authorities faced for the length of time that had gone by without an arrest, Fresno County sheriff Margaret Mims told reporters at a Sept. 25 press conference, “It takes time to gather all of the evidence we need. We would much rather get it right rather than get it fast.”

Detectives investigating the crime scene were immediately struck by the fact that the home’s door was locked and that there was no sign of forced entry—“no broken windows, no smashed-down doors,” says Botti. According to court documents, the couple’s 26-year-old daughter Alison told officers of “incidents of domestic violence” her mother had allegedly suffered at Alan’s hands. Mims says that when detectives interviewed Alan the day after the murders, he told them he knew Jennifer had

a boyfriend and was “curious to find out” about him. “[Jennifer] had found a new interest in her life,” says Botti. “[Alan] had been served divorce papers.” Adds Mims: “Those are the possibilities we are looking at as far as motive.”

Authorities also note that Alan owns a white truck similar to one seen on security cameras leaving the neighborhood shortly after the murders. And after Cynthia’s car



LIVES SHATTERED

1. Jennifer (at a school outside Fresno where she was principal) was “phenomenally” popular, says friend Peter Woolcock.
2. Alan (with Jennifer in January 2016) was “quieter, more reserved,” than his wife, says Woolcock.
3. Friends joined Alison Dupras’s July 23 protest with signs reading “Make an Arrest.”

caught fire in front of her house on Nov. 22, Alan’s sister told police that Alan had drunkenly bragged about setting the blaze.

For Alison—who often spoke with police and had organized a protest seven months after the murders—the arrest is a relief. “My mom was beautiful in every sense of the word. My grandmother was hilarious and warm. I feel like this arrest is long overdue.... I definitely feel more safe.” ●

KEY EVIDENCE

Video from security cameras at homes, a business and a church in Cynthia’s neighborhood shows a truck similar to Alan Dupras’s white pickup on the scene the afternoon of Dec. 9, when, according to the coroner, the murders likely occurred. Police say Alan denied traveling through that area that weekend. They also say his phone was used on Nov. 1 to search for instructions on disabling a GPS tracking device for that truck’s make and model.

