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Karen Read speaks for first time in murder case of Boston Police Officer John O'Keefe



Karen Read, who is accused of killing her boyfriend Boston Police Officer John O'Keefe, is surrounded by media after attending a hearing in Norfolk Superior Court on Wednesday, in Dedham, MA. (Nancy Lane/Boston Herald) May 3, 2023

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The twisting and complicated murder case against Karen Read took yet another unexpected turn when the defendant, voice quivering and tears in her eyes, spoke directly for herself on the steps outside Norfolk Superior Court.

“It feels we’re the only ones fighting for the truth of what happened to John O’Keefe, and me, and my family, and my attorneys, and my team have marshaled every resource to get to the truth,” Read said Wednesday, her attorneys David Yannetti and Alan Jackson at her side and her family behind her. “It just feels like no one else wants it.”

“I tried to save his life,” she said, as her supporters at the step clapped and exclaimed. “I tried to save his life at six in the morning. I was covered in his blood. I was the only one trying to save his life.”

When questioned by a reporter if she did it, she said: “We know who spearheaded this coverup. You all know.”

At this point, a man on the street — a member of the “Justice for JJ” pin group who have attended the hearings on the prosecution’s side — said “Why’d you admit to it?”

“She didn’t admit to it. She didn’t admit to anything close to that,” defense attorney Jackson said. “She asked a question, which is very different.”

That question was brought up at her initial appearance days after her boyfriend of two years, Boston Police Officer John O’Keefe, was discovered dead on the front lawn of 34 Fairview St. in Canton on Jan. 29, 2022. First responders found Read attempting to resuscitate O’Keefe and using her body to cover his in an attempt to provide warmth in the frigid winter air.

Assistant District Attorney Adam Lally, the prosecutor for the case, said at that time that Read had questioned whether she had hit O’Keefe that night, leaving him for dead in the snow. Lally said then that witnesses said Read cried, “I hit him” several times when she discovered his body.

That’s the Commonwealth’s theory of the case. Read is charged with second-degree

The defense's theory is that then-homeowner Boston Police Officer Brian Albert or perhaps someone else in the home beat O'Keefe to death and that Albert's then-dog, a German Shepherd named Chloe — who has since been rehomed — also participated in the attack. Their request for a court order to secrete the animal's records was approved in a Friday memo by Superior Court Judge Beverly Cannone.

Wednesday's hearing was much less a win for the defense team, and brought not just clarity for Thursday's planned evidentiary hearing, but also its end: "There will be no evidentiary hearing," Cannone ordered.

"There's nothing fanciful about any of the facts that we submitted and have supported with affidavits and evidence," Jackson said during the hearing. "The Commonwealth's theory, quite to the converse, is supported by nearly nothing, nothing."

Following arguments by Yannetti, Lally, and defense attorneys for Albert and McCabe — respectively Gregory Henning and Kevin Reddington — Cannone ruled that "there will be no evidentiary hearing" and granted Henning and Reddington's motions to quash testimony from their clients.

Cannone has yet to rule on the defense's other request to receive communications and location data from Albert's phone and communications data from McCabe's phone.



Sgt. Detective Brian Albert talks about apprehending murder suspect Philip Markoff. (Photo by Angela Rowlings/MediaNews Group/Boston Herald)apprehending murder suspect Philip Markoff.

Lally has continued to argue that the defense’s requests amount to a “fishing expedition” and that the requests go far beyond what is allowed in Massachusetts’s applicable criminal code and amounts to harassment toward these outside parties.

“This isn’t a situation where Commonwealth is afraid of evidence being produced — or ‘desperately afraid’ as I think it was characterized — It’s simply that counsel and the defendant need to comply with the rules and need to actually state actual facts and actual evidence as opposed to the fanciful facts that have been submitted to the court,” Lally said, adding that the evidence in the case “are conjunctively simply hard to reconcile with counsel’s ‘facts.’”

The defense attorneys were clearly floored by the court ruling and arguments, and stated following the hearing that they may pursue new avenues, including possibly appealing for a new judge.

“What just happened in that courtroom was a miscarriage,” Jackson said on the courthouse steps before Read spoke. “The Commonwealth is desperate not to get the facts out in front of the public. They’re desperate not to have witnesses testify. They’re desperate not to have witnesses, have to answer questions, and it’s because they don’t have any facts to support their theory of the case.”

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Flint McColgan is the police and courts reporter for the Boston Herald. He previously worked covering politics in Pennsylvania and breaking news and government in North Dakota starting in 2012. He also serves as the news editor on Saturdays. Before journalism, he supported himself as an occasionally successful roving pool player in the Midwest and southwest.

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