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## Ben Novack's wife: I'm innocent

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Narcy Novack, wife of slain hotel heir Ben Novack Jr., finally spoke Tuesday, saying simply that her husband's murder case is "getting wilder by the minute."

She didn't elaborate, but her attorney, Howard Tanner, said Novack, 53, did not kill her husband, had nothing to gain from his death and has fully cooperated with police.

"Any allegations that she was involved is absolutely ridiculous," said Tanner, a New York criminal defense attorney.

He added that Narcy Novack is distraught over her husband's death and not interested in whether she stands to inherit his sizable fortune.

Tanner would not comment on whether she is a beneficiary of his estate and Novack's will is not yet public.

### DEAL EXCLUDED WIFE

But in an August 1991 postnuptial agreement signed by the couple, Ben Novack made clear he did not want his wife to get a substantial part of his estate -- excluding her from the proceeds of his life insurance, gifts, trusts and business interests.

"Upon the death of either Narcy or Ben, the estate . . . of the deceased shall descend to or vest in their respective heirs-in-law . . . as if no marriage had ever taken place between Narcy and Ben . . ." the postnuptial agreement reads.

However, the document goes on to say that a valid will may supersede the postnuptial document.

At that time, Ben Novack was worth about \$3.2 million and was earning about \$324,000 annually, including \$60,000 a year from a trust fund, presumably set up by his father, Ben Novack Sr., founder of the Fontainebleau resort in Miami Beach.

However, he also listed about \$1.5 million in liabilities, most of it -- \$1 million -- money he owed to business accounts.

Narcy Novack had about \$200,000 in assets, \$28,000 in debts and no source of income, according to the 1991 document.

She found her husband's bludgeoned body at the Hilton Rye Town hotel in Westchester

County, N.Y., where they were attending a conference he had organized as CEO of his business, Convention Concepts Unlimited.

Narcy Novack -- a native of Ecuador who married Ben Novack in 1991 -- went to breakfast and found him slain when she returned to the room about 8 a.m.

Tanner said they are waiting for the medical examiner's report before deciding whether to order a private autopsy.

Novack, 53, had claimed in 2002 that his wife orchestrated an elaborate scheme to rob and kill him. Narcy Novack initially denied she had anything to do with it, claimed that he was bound and gagged as part of a sex game and that he had some peculiar sex habits.

She later admitted she set the whole thing up, according to the police report.

Ben Novack filed for divorce shortly thereafter, but later dropped the proceedings and refused to prosecute. They reconciled a short time later.

Tanner would not comment on the incident.

## **STORMY MARRIAGE**

By all accounts, the couple had a stormy marriage, and Ben Novack was known to have a gruff manner that earned him enemies.

Police in Rye Brook, N.Y., have said that everyone who was at the hotel at the time of the murder is a person of interest in the crime.

But Tanner said police are likely to look at others as well.

"Based upon the background of Mr. Novack, I'm sure the police won't restrict themselves to people at the hotel. . . . Mr. Novack was a wealthy individual who had a lot of business contacts -- some of whom may not have been staying at the hotel," Tanner said.

He would not say whether his client pointed investigators toward any possible suspects. She was interrogated for many hours, voluntarily, without an attorney, Tanner said.

"They have concluded so far that everything she has told them has checked out," he said.