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More charges likely against Novack widow in death of mother-in-law

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Narcy Novack

Narcy Novack, the Fort Lauderdale woman charged in the grisly dumbbell beating death of her millionaire husband, is expected to face additional federal charges, possibly connected to the murder of her mother-in-law.

Novack, 54, is in Westchester, N.Y., County Prison, awaiting trial on federal charges in the killing of Fontainebleau heir Ben Novack Jr., whose slaughtered body was found in a Rye Brook, N.Y. hotel room on July 12, 2009.

New York Assistant U.S. Attorney Elliott Jacobson revealed in court this week that there is a possibility that a grand jury will issue a superseding indictment within the next few weeks. A superseding indictment would include new charges and/or suspects in the case. Jacobson did not elaborate, but he has previously said investigators have evidence that Narcy Novack orchestrated the murder-for-hire plot against Bernice Novack, the ex-wife of the late Ben Novack Sr., who built the iconic Miami Beach hotel.

Ben Novack Jr.'s 87-year-old mother was found sprawled in a pool of blood on April 5, 2009 – three months before her son was killed. Her death was ruled accidental by Fort Lauderdale police and the Broward County Medical Examiner, despite evidence later discovered by N.Y. investigators suggesting she had been murdered. Fort Lauderdale police and the medical examiner have since reclassified the case.

Narcy Novack's lawyer, Howard Tanner, confirmed Friday that a superseding indictment was "likely," and that it would be logical to speculate that the additional charges would be in connection with Bernice Novack's beating death.

He maintains that his client is innocent.

Sleeping on a prison cot is a far cry from the luxury linens Nancy Novack had been accustomed to as the wife of a rich businessman. She previously expressed discontent about her new digs.

"She was much calmer in this court appearance than the last one," Tanner said. "Basically, she just doesn't want to be in jail."

Her next court date is set for April 8.

Prosecutors have cast Nancy Novack as a calculated black widow who masterminded the murders, thereby eliminating anyone who stood in the way of inheriting her husband's fortune. Jacobson earlier revealed there was another scheme to harm Nancy Novack's daughter, May Abad, whose two sons stand to inherit the bulk of the estimated \$8 million estate should their grandmother be convicted of Ben Novack's murder.

In addition to Nancy Novack, those charged as co-conspirators are her brother, Cristobal Veliz, 57, of New Jersey; another relative, Dennis Ramirez, 36; Joel Gonzalez, 25, of Miami; and an unnamed cooperating suspect.

The Miami Herald reported in August that Gonzalez was also cooperating with authorities. He did not appear in court with the other defendants Thursday.

Tanner dismissed the cooperating witnesses.

"Cooperating witnesses cooperate for many reasons, and it's usually to benefit themselves," he said.

Suspicion fell on Nancy Novack two years ago, after her 52-year-old husband, who owned a successful convention-planning business, traveled to New York to oversee one of his events at the Rye Town Hilton Hotel in Rye Brook. He was found on the floor of his hotel suite by his wife. He was bound with duct tape, beaten and his eyes slit. Authorities allege his wife participated in the slaying.

Since there is no federal murder statute, the suspects have been charged with interstate domestic violence – which carries a maximum of life in prison. Prosecutors say Nancy Novack let the killers into the Rye Brook hotel room, watched as they beat her husband with dumbbells and ordered them to cut his eyes out.

She has pleaded not guilty.

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