

My murder jury trial, what an experience.

“I shot Sue four times, four times, I shot Sue four times”. Those words still ring in my head. After numerous letters and appearances, I was chosen awhile back to be in the jury for a gruesome murder trial - what an experience. A terrible experience, yet one I’m glad I’ve had. I learned, I wept and when it was over I went to church and prayed - for the victim, for the murderer and for all of us jury members; what a terrible civic responsibility.

Day One

For the second or third time I got the jury selection letter in the mail, I was the lucky one chosen to do my civic duty. I showed up at the court house, watched the explanatory video and expected to be dismissed. 150 of us citizens were all waiting for the name lottery. In the first lottery 19 people were chosen for 12 possible spots, one left to go for the first 20 to be questioned, and my name was called. Shoot, almost made it out. Each potential juror had to look at the accused and the counsel called out challenge or consent. The front row of six filled up fast, then several challenges. I was trying to figure out what they were looking for. Young female and ethnic people seemed to be excluded. Why? Only three spots left and six people to go and I was last, no way I was going to have to serve, thank god. The Crown Attorney kept on staring at me, what did that mean? Then five turned down in a row. My turn, I looked straight at Mr. Ryan, a former Toronto police officer, retired now, the accused murderer of his wife, and I could read nothing. I thought they said challenged and was about to leave when I realised they actually had said okay. Shoot, there goes three weeks. On a murder trial, warned of gruesome evidence. OMG.

We were ushered into the new court room, the lucky 12 of us. Then the first surprise, the defendant wants to repeat his accusation and plead in front of us. This time he says not guilty but goes on to say that he does plead guilty to manslaughter. What's this, he admits to killing his wife but not murdering her? The judge asks the crown prosecutor if he still wants to proceed, and I'm thinking I still might get to go home today, I've got tons to do, meetings, lunches, work.... But he says no, he wants to proceed to

argue that the accused committed second degree murder. All of us I think, no sigh in resignation; we're here for the duration.

The judge gives us his speech. Mr. Ryan is presumed innocent and the crown needs to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. Thinking someone is likely guilty or probably guilty is not enough; we need to think he's GUILTY. But at the same time the Crown doesn't need to prove certainty - close to that - beyond a reasonable doubt, but not certainty. And reasonable doubt is not a slight doubt or a maybe doubt but a common sense reasonable doubt. I never knew before today that there were so many different types of doubts.

The Crown Attorney starts his opening. We will see gruesome evidence, pictures and descriptions that he'd prefer to not share, but he must, so we hear the facts. OMG what's coming out? Then out come the first two pictures right away, they hit us in the stomach, terribly graphic pictures of a dead woman on her kitchen floor, sticking half out into the hallway, in her dressing gown and slippers, pools of blood, a knife, a fork and a breakfast plate with eggs and toast spilled and spread out around her on the floor. I feel sick to my stomach.

The afternoon is a slew of photos and test tubes filled with bullets and casings. Four bullets, four casings, bullet holes, bullets scratches, a knocked over pepper mill and a nicked mill and a braised carton. A few more pictures of the deceased and close-ups of her bullet wounds. One wound they call a tattoo wound because it shows the discolouration around the wound from the mouth of the long gun rifle barrel. It is amazing how the tenth time you've seen a bullet wound in a head it starts to no longer impact you. I wonder if this is good or bad. And today's the anniversary of JFK's shooting and I'm being showed bullets, casings, fragments and blood samples. Irony?

What impacts me the most are odd things. How clean the kitchen is. How she put out two coffee cups, with happy faces on the side, with creamer already poured in both. She made two breakfasts with toast and eggs and a full pot of coffee. The placemats are a Muskoka scene; there are flowers on the breakfast table, wine on the counter, and an oven mitt attached to the

fridge. "Who cares about the diet" it says. The dog bowl is clean, the TV was on, the sound low. The stove was still on, coffee pot on. Eggs, plate, toast, knife and fork lying on the floor beside a dead wife. Everything normal, everything wonderful; except for the dead wife, and all the blood.

Day One Afternoon

Then we get the computer pictorial house tour, sort of like one of those real estate virtual tours. Click here and you'll get another view. The two washrooms, perfectly tidy and clean, the downstairs one with the seat up, "we know who used that one", says the Crown. The cute bath mats and the folded towels lain over the edge of the sink. Pictures of flowers upstairs and golf courses downstairs. Next up is the narrow steep staircase with a corner in it to the basement, with no pictures on the walls disturbed. Why are they pointing that out? I'm trying to figure out the coming argument. The door to the basement staircase that when open blocks the view to the kitchen, and for access needs to be closed first. The two long guns in their gun case on the pool table, almost lovingly stored and presented. The gun used in the killing is lying on the floor by the hunting gear, all packed in a suitcase and a tackle box ready to go hunting. The gun has traces of her blood on the barrel. "Blow back blood it's called" we're told. The bullets came from this gun according to the forensic lab. The magazine which holds ten bullets still has two full and one spent cartridge in it. We found four upstairs. I start wondering, where are the other three?

There are ammunition boxes spilled out on the bar. A half drunken bottle of coconut liqueur and an empty bottle of vodka is also there. But isn't the top on it I wonder? Lots of alcohol in dispensers above the bar, on the bar and on the shelves and the fireplace, but they look full and dusty. This man loves his drinks. We're shown the overturned bar stools and leather chair, all very heavy. Another TV turned on with no sound on - CP 24. The gun locker is inside the water heater room, gun locker and room doors and storage case doors all wide open, with what looks like four guns on the floor, no eight, no ten guns are strewn on the floor, another one in the corner, how many is that in total? 14 long guns? Ammunition boxes and ammunition lying on the floor, in the closet and on the top of the water heater, not to mention the bar. How much ammunition does one guy need? One of the rifles has its magazine in and ammunition loaded. We're

shown pictures of his gun license and also all his registration papers. The picture is of a short haired clean shaven man, a little fierce looking. The man at the defence table has long flowing white hair and full facial hair and a full beard. When we return to the jury room all I can think of is how many guns does one person need? How much ammunition? How many display cases? How many locks? How many alcohol bottles? But then if someone could see in our houses what would they see too much of? We'll see you tomorrow says the Judge, very friendly like. I need a drink. I need a hug. I need some goodness in this world.

Day Two

First the investigating officer takes us through the balance of the basement, the ammunition, the contents of the bags put on the truck and the mysterious envelope again, then the paramedic partner tells of his assessment of Ryan lying in the garage, the ABC test, (airways, breathing and consciousness I think), no smell of alcohol, no signs of stroke or other medical issues, but still he doesn't respond verbally. Then the officer that guarded him in the hospital tells us she thinks that Ryan was faking being asleep and was actually watching her. For the first time we're told he had seven times the legal limit of alcohol in his system for driving. The psychiatrist needs to wait until midnight to allow enough time for the alcohol to leave his system before he can do a psychiatric assessment.

And then finally the family friend he was supposed to go hunting with the morning he shot his wife is called to the witness stand. Another hunter that looks sort of like Santa, big bushy white hair and full facial hair. What is it about these hunters that make them want to look like Santa? Listening to the friend was incredibly hard, it must have been close to impossible for him to testify. He described how he caught his friend as he was falling down in the garage, held him for five or seven minutes, how his friend said he shot his wife, and then kept repeating, four times, four times, four times. He says I'm dead, Sue's dead. But unbelievably this Santa friend didn't go look for the shot wife; he stayed there in the garage with the murderer. He called 911 and told them about Ryan, short of breath, but didn't mention anything about Ryan's shot wife inside.

The paramedic described that the firemen were there first, attending to Ryan, and then they took over. No one went inside very quickly, there were dogs inside. It's so strange how everyone seemed focused on Ryan lying down in the garage but no one was overly concerned to find out about the shot, murdered wife lying inside.

Then we heard the 911 call. I never thought a 911 operator could be so inefficient. They must have asked him to spell the street name half a dozen or more times. Then the envelope comes back. Ryan, supposedly drunk as a skunk or having a stroke, in an altered state of mind, has the presence of mind to reach into his coat pocket, remove an envelope with a return address on it and hand it to Santa to provide the proper address to 911.

The hunter says he doesn't know what the background voice on the tape is saying. The prosecutor seems surprised and asks him if he really doesn't. He asks if some head phones might help. The defence objects. The judge intervenes. We're kicked out of court and sent to the jury room. For ten minutes they say, then 20, then half an hour. Something big is going on in court and we're cut out of it. We're called back. "After listening on ear phones", the Crown Prosecutor asks, "did it help you recollect what was said?" Yes, the background is Larry saying "I killed Sue, four times, four times, four times". And did you also say that in the video tape interview the day of the incident? "Yes, I told them Larry said he killed Sue, four times". Was his recollection bad? Was he trying to protect his friend? Did he think they'd forget about the video tape interview? It must be so hard to be Ryan's friend, to be called to testify against him, to sit there listening to the 911 tape all over again. "Four times". I'll never forget that line, "Four Times, I shot Sue Four Times".

Day Three

Today is the expert pathologist day. We started with a Ukrainian coroner who explained her training, how she did an autopsy and what she found when she did one on Mrs. Ryan. Four shots, two that went through Sue Ryan's brain and killed her. One grazed the face and left fragments in front of her head brushing her lip leaving tattoo markings, fragments that embed themselves in the skin. Another one grazed the back of her neck. The two that hit her, one above the ear, had the muzzle on the skin creating an

abrasion the exact outline of the gun barrel and sight. The second one in front of the ear had markings suggesting it was fired at very close distance. Both went right through her head, but below her brain. One cut off some blood vessels and created haemorrhaging and then damaged the sinus system that would have likely killed her. The second went through her artery causing massive haemorrhaging, unquestionably killing her. Did she die quickly? "Likely before she hit the floor", was the curt response. Four shots at close range - two exact hits, two slight misses - all from her right side while there she was, cooking eggs and toast, breakfast for herself and her husband.

Then we got the forensic toxicologist who educated us on alcohol. We were educated on when you're drunk, when you're sober and what about in between. Great detail on the impacts on the central nervous system from alcohol: depression, inhibitions, being relaxed, risk taking behaviour, motor skill impact, being able to do divided activities, and ultimately unconsciousness and potentially death. We talked about what happens to a person who drinks every day or every week, and a heavy drinker, as they build up tolerance, do they get used to alcohol and its impact? Do they deal with it better? I get the impression that he's trying hard to say, any amount of drinking is bad, you might be intoxicated and not function well, and yet at the same time, if you're a solid large person, who has had a meal recently and who has drunk alcohol repeatedly before and built up a tolerance, you can still function fine even with lots of drinks in you. But, can a falling down drunken person climb steep stairs, open and close a door and put a gun barrel to someone's head without disturbing them, and then shoot four shots at close range? I keep hearing in my brain, bang, bang. Four times. Four times. Then the big question, if he's seven times the legal limit when Ryan gets to the hospital how much would he have in his system at 7am? His answer is fascinating, "it depends on if he recently drank a lot, after 7am, because then he would not have to have been inebriated at 7, since the absorption and impact of drinking alcohol doesn't occur for 15 minutes or so after you drink it". Didn't Ryan talk on the two phone calls that morning with his hunting friend Santa fine? So the key question is, when did he start drinking, before or after he shot his wife? Was he inebriated when he shot her? Was he in control, or drunk, when he murdered his wife?

Ryan's best friend is called to the witness stand next. They drank and smoked together almost every Friday evening in Ryan's basement bar. His first story was that Ryan didn't drink much, just socially, locked his guns behind 2 or 3 locks and that his wife mentioned a health issue on their last visit. Then the Judge kicked us out of court again and they had some chats without us. When we came back we heard a different story. After reviewing his previous testimony the best friend now changed his recollection. They usually had five or six drinks. There were six or so locks to get to the guns. He had seen Ryan drunk before, often in fact, they called it "tying one on" and it was Ryan himself, who two days before the murder, said a doctor told him he had a tumour on his gall bladder that might have to be removed. He also said that after drinking a lot, sometimes Ryan would go a month or so without drinking and just have water. Finally he admits he's seen Ryan's guns before, Ryan showed him them. Then I start shouting to myself, when the two of you were drinking on a Friday night? Is that when Ryan would take them out of his case and show them around? We're not told when. Finally, we're also told that the best friend has been visiting Ryan recently, since the murder, and Ryan has said that he doesn't remember anything about the day he shot his wife. Nothing. He remembers nothing.

Then it was the blood expert. We heard about blood-letting and projectile blood spots, which have heads, and tails - tails away from the source, passive blood spots - which just fall from gravity, blood that pools and blood that drops on top of prior blood spots. We heard that from projectile blood, with the size in inverse proportion to the force of the source, small spots mean guns, big spots mean some other hit like a kick, and with their tails, we can know where the blood came from and with what type of weapon. Through the center of all these blood spots they string pink strings back to the source of the blood. We're shown pictures of all these pink strings coming out of the blood spots running back in the kitchen. All the blood came from someone standing in front of the sink.

On the fork we see imprinted blood, meaning she was holding the fork when first blood appeared. There was no blood on the top half of her lying down, but lots of blood pooled on the floor below her. And no smearing or

wiping. What does it all mean? She fell and then never moved again, by herself or by anyone else. "She died before she hit the floor."

Finally we go through ballistics. We hear about different holes. He seems excited that one went through the kitchen wall and almost through the dining room wall on the other side, making a "perfect hole for a ballistic trajectory rod". More strings. Another bullet left a groove in the counter. Two more hit movable objects and therefore were no good. This time it was blue strings back to the source. I was wondering if the intersection of all these strings is the front of the gun or the back and I start to wonder if a long gun can even fit in the kitchen hall behind the crossing blue lines. We see the blue lines from a few directions. Conclusion? Mrs. Ryan was murdered while she was cooking breakfast for two, in front of her stove and sink. With a fork in her hand, eggs and toast on the plate – which are now on the floor. And coffee, all made, but not yet poured in the cups with the waiting cream. She fell and never moved again.

I go home amazed at the information we can get from blood, bullets and pink and blue strings.

Day Four

One of the top 10 emergency doctors in Canada, according to some journal on his C.V., testified this morning. He's so quiet and uncomfortable, just came off of night shift, unshaven, casual clothes. I doubt he's ever testified before. He was one of the first to see Larry Ryan at the hospital and did the initial and follow-up assessments most of the day. He determined that Ryan was a 14 out of 15 on the Glasgow coma scale, some test of verbal, vision and motor skills. I first think that's really bad but then conclude it's almost perfect. The Doctor says Ryan had to be speaking somewhat because otherwise he wouldn't get the 14 out of 15 score, but he doesn't really remember. We're shown a log with lots of scribbled and short forms we have to walk through. HBD means has been drinking. Some other four letter short forms that mean his breathing is okay, another one that means no temperature. Another that means get him a blood test. Another one - I forget... According to this Doctor, Ryan seems fine; other than he's had some drinks and just shot his wife of course. But the Defence then takes this experienced doctor with the worst writing I've ever seen, and us, to a

nurse's report that said he was far weaker in neurological ability based on measurements the nurses took at regular intervals. Ryan's lawyer never says it but he's certainly suggesting, believe the nurse and her low assessment rather than this very busy emergency room doctor and his 14 out of 15 one. He's got so many other patients to worry about. Then we go through the alcohol readings again and confuse millimols with millilitres again. Didn't the defence Attorney do just this with the toxicology expert just a day ago? Seems like it was last week or last month - this trial seems like it has taken over my life. Is he trying to get us confused on the different measurements for alcohol, forget the actual measurements, the impact of tolerance and just focus on the seven times legal limit sound bite. He keeps repeating, "So drunk he could have been close to death". The defence is clearly trying to suggest Ryan was extremely inebriated and potentially close to death, he must have said, "Could be close to death" half a dozen times. While at the same time, the Crown (and the doctor) were stressing that Ryan seemed fine, 14 out of 15 on the something or other scale, and that with tolerance and lots of experience drinking, very high levels of alcohol and almost normal functioning are still consistent. The doctor said one line that stuck with me, "I treat the person not the reading, and I didn't think he needed my intervention". When asked if he was concerned Ryan was so drunk that he was close to death, the response, "absolutely not". This doctor didn't think Ryan was so drunk as to not be able to function. He didn't think Ryan needed any medical help. I want to go get drunk tonight and see how high my reading is and see if I can still function.

Then we heard from the ballistics forensic expert. She speaks confidently, straight into the mike, loudly, in full sentences with great analogues, if it would please the court, etc... She's been here before. She's an expert at testifying. She concluded that one shot was taken close to contact with the skin of Sue Ryan's cheek because she could see the muzzle imprint on the skin. She then went into a fascinating review of how a bullet when shot expels gas that enters the skin producing a balloon like effect, forcing the skin to expand, press back against the mussel and leave an almost exact imprint. She then explained how if the muzzle was away from contact it would produce soot that would discolour the area around the bullet wound, but then further away, the soot circle would get smaller. In addition bullet

fragments and other debris would embed themselves in the skin if the mussel was away from contact but within 15 or so inches. Closer than 10 inches you'd see soot and embedded fragments, between 10 and 15 inches, just fragments and if in contact, just the hole and imprint because all the soot and fragments would be inside the head. She showed us the distance ballistic tests she did and how different distances produced different markings. We saw imprints, soot, fragments and several holes. We looked back at photographs of a dead woman and holding up the two photos and then four photos, we compared bullet markings. I felt very scientific. Then I looked at the dead woman, her hair, her dressing gown, the egg and toast on the floor. I then looked across at Ryan, sitting there reading the ballistic report. How could he do it? To a wife he had lived with. Who got up to make him a pot of coffee, to be poured into a happy cup with cream already in, eggs and toast, before he headed on his hunting trip. How could he shoot her four times, four times? I'm amazed at what I now know about ballistics, soot and bullet markings. But I don't know about what motivates a shooter. What motivates a murderer.

The ballistic conclusion? One shot was in contact with the cheek above the ear, one closer than 10 inches to the front of the ear and then one that was a similar distance that glanced the lip. How hard is it to pull the trigger of a 22? She has the analogy: "About the same as pulling 4 and a half packages of butter, with one finger, toward you" we are told. It was a semi automatic so each shot had to be pulled independently. Could you hear a 22? "Just a slight bang, like a car door or a cabinet, not like a hunting rifle. And just a bang. A hunting rifle has a bang (when the bullet hits the oxygen) and then a worsh, (when the bullet breaks the sound barrier, like the bang followed by the worsh from fireworks". This gal is good, lots of helpful analogies, almost too good, too practiced. I'm scared to think how many times she's had to testify in a court for different shooting victims.

We also reviewed safety and storage. "Any experienced gun owner always checks that the barrel is empty and the safety is on", we're told over and over by several different witnesses. It almost seems like habit for any gun owner. I certainly hope so. Plus everyone was taught safe storage, unloaded and behind lots of doors and locks, with the ammunition stored separately, so that any accidental shooting never happens. I sure hope so.

So this supposedly dead drunk guy, who couldn't even speak or function neurologically, close to death, with 7 times the legal limit of alcohol in his blood; got his gun and loaded it, (which was probably locked behind several doors and locks) climbed the steep stairs (not disturbing anything) opened and shut the door, rounded the corner, came around the fridge, raised the long gun rifle (never disturbing his wife or making a sound as she continued to cook breakfast) and then shot Sue Ryan at close contact, four times, two hits by the ear, one glancing the lip, one glancing the neck, while she was still standing with the plate of eggs and toast in her hands. Sue Ryan fell to the floor, and never moved again.

The Crown pauses, looks at us, and then rests its case, boy that was quick.

The defence gets up and shocks us completely. The defence is not calling any witnesses. The defence rests. It's all over. We were warned it could be a three week trial and now its over in a week.

We're told closing arguments will be on Monday and bring a change of clothes. We will likely be sequestered for our deliberations Monday afternoon and evening and thereafter, as long as it takes us to reach a verdict. I feel very let down. Like I got the first two acts of a play but then someone tells us we're missing the next two acts and skipping straight to the finale. But I want to hear from more witnesses. What about the fireman, the nurse, and where the heck was the dog, where did he go? I want to hear from the accused. He's who I really want to take the witness stand.

Actually, I guess we have it all. We've had the two paramedics, the doctor who thought Ryan was 14 out of 15, the nurse who thought he was faking not being able to speak, the autopsy that showed us how she died, the alcohol guy who educated us on levels and tolerance, the gun string guy who showed where the shots came from and went to, and the ballistic expert who showed us what those bullets went through, her head. The best friend who first said Ryan drank socially and then corrected himself by saying, well maybe he tied one on every once and awhile. And the hunting friend, who first said Ryan didn't say anything to him, and then after re-

listening to the 911 tape with ear phones and re-reading his prior testimony remembers Ryan said, "I shot Sue, four times, four times".

So now it's up to us - to decide the fate of Larry Ryan. Did he murder his wife that morning before he was to go hunting, or was he so drunk he didn't know what he was doing?

And I want to go out, get four and a half sticks of butter and see how hard it is to pull them toward me. I want to get drunk and see what I blow and if I can walk up stairs. I want to make a speech against guns and lobby for much tighter gun registers or whatever. Who needs so many guns in their basement anyway? I want to thank our criminal justice and health care workers for the tough but very professional and complete job they do. I know more about blood spots, guns, alcohol and ballistics than I ever wanted to. And I know all this after just four fragmented but very strange days. And I could have been in business meetings all this week. Boy life is strange.

Next weeks discussions will be interesting. But a man's life and liberty is at issue, and so is the truth about a wife's death. Did he murder her or just kill her? Second degree murder or manslaughter?

Day Five

Day Five, the final day in court started with the Crown Attorney walking us through the testimony, the witnesses, the exhibits and his argument. He argued that Ryan shot his wife and then went downstairs and got drunk, either because he realised what he just did or more likely to decrease his murder charge to a manslaughter one. Ryan's long experience as a police officer gave him the knowledge that being drunk might be enough of a reason to find he was only guilty of manslaughter not murder. The Crown however went on to say that even if we didn't believe that, but believed Ryan was drinking before he killed his wife, Ryan was of sound mind enough to know what he was doing and to have an intent to kill or cause bodily harm with the risk of death to his wife. The Crown argued, how could a falling down drunk, open and close the garage door, put his supplies outside, shave, unlock several locks on gun cabinets, load bullets in a magazine, attach the magazine, chose the quieter 22 rather than the louder

hunting rifle lying there ready to go hunting with, climb steep stairs, round the corner, open and close the door, and raise the rifle to his wife's cheek? All without rousing his wife. Then he shot her four times all of the shots within a hand span, killing her before she hit the ground. He reminded us that Ryan had talked twice that morning with his friend on the phone and hadn't sounded strange or drunk.

The Crown also argued that even if Ryan was drunk, would someone in an altered state say to his friend, "I killed Sue, four times, four times"? And then pull the envelope with his return address on it to provide accurate address information to the confused 911 operator. And finally to repeat, "I fucking killed her". Those confessions by Ryan, heard on the 911 tape, repeated by the hunting friend, showed that Ryan knew what he was doing and was of a mind that could form an intention to kill.

Ryan's Defence Attorney then stood up and focused on the blood alcohol numbers, "Seven times the legal limit, could have drunk so much he was close to death". But I kept on thinking about what the emergency doctor said; "I treat the patient not the number". The Defence argued that the Crown didn't provide a motive, any evidence of when Ryan started drinking and when he shot his wife. He also appealed to us that given Ryan had agreed he killed his wife and was guilty of manslaughter, even though now he couldn't remember anything, that Ryan was somehow a trustworthy man. We should believe him that he didn't mean to murder her.

Then the Judge closed. He provided an excellent summary of the evidence. I was surprised and impressed at how thorough, balanced and excellent the Judge's summary was. I was exhausted after each of my days in court, I took detailed notes. This judge synthesised the salient points and reviewed them completely and objectively. He must have done his homework over the weekend. He also reviewed the Crown and Defence arguments, the legal principles we needed to be aware of and then he thanked us for our attention and diligence to our job. Even though I was very impressed with his summary and its completeness, it was so objective I have absolutely no idea what he might have decided if there was no jury. I didn't know what he thought. Murder or Manslaughter? The Judge certainly didn't say.

We broke, I was chosen to be foreman, we the jury concluded, and then we returned to the court to render our judgement. As foreman I had to stand and look directly at the accused. His eyes were burning through me, as if he could force me to change my mind and what I was about to say. Yet I confidently declared, guilty. I was relieved it was over. He cried. The Defence Counsel looked chest fallen. I couldn't look at the family and friends in the gallery. We left and rejoined our lives, but forever changed and impacted by our experience.

Today Larry Ryan was convicted of second degree murder. It was emotionally draining to come to a conclusion on someone's guilt and someone's liberty. It was exhausting, but at the same time strangely exhilarating as we / I came to the realisation that the jury system really works. I'm not allowed to discuss anything that went on inside the jury room, but believe me, the system really works.

Walking away from this jury experience I think about the experts on ballistics, strings, blood spots and autopsy. These experts did a comprehensive and excellent job, both in their investigation as well as their presentation to us. The Judge was thorough and objective. I leave this week impressed with our legal system, it works.

However, If Larry Ryan really did use his experience as a police officer, as the Crown suggested, to try to reduce his sentence, I'm disgusted. If he didn't, but shot his wife while drunk and drinking, I think he's the poster of the bad gun owner, the bad cop. I also am shocked that someone a few miles from my house could have so many guns, rifles and ammunition in his basement, next to so much alcohol. That he used to murder his wife while she was cooking breakfast. I now want to ban guns or at least guns anywhere near alcohol or in homes and basements – keep them up in the hunting lodges under lock and key. The best registration, training and licensing didn't help Susan Ryan. And he was a retired police officer. The guns made it just too simple to kill her. Maybe she'd still be dead if Larry Ryan didn't own so many guns in his basement, but guns were quicker, more accurate, and more deadly. Why did he need so many guns stored in his basement anyway? Can't we get rid of them?

What sticks with me now that it's over? The happy cups with cream already poured in them. Sue Ryan loved her husband, was cooking him eggs and toast prior to his hunting trip. And yet he snuck up on her and shot her four times, at a close range, in the side, dead before she hit the floor. How could he do it, and god, why? I hear echo again and again in my head: "I shot Sue four times, four times, I shot Sue four times". "I fucking shot her".