

Cara Rintala granted bail in advance of 4th trial for 2010 killing of spouse, Annamarie Cochrane Rintala

Updated: Nov. 23, 2021, 2:10 p.m. [Story source: MassLive.com](#)

Cara Rintala granted bail, may live in Rhode Island

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NORTHAMPTON — A Hampshire Superior Court judge on Tuesday allowed Cara Rintala to be released on bail and gave her permission to live with her elderly parents and her teenage daughter in Rhode Island while she awaits her fourth murder trial for the 2010 killing of Annamarie Cochrane Rintala in Granby.

Judge Richard Carey set bail at \$50,000 cash or a \$500,000 personal surety. The amount was the midpoint between the \$100,000 cash bail sought by the Northwestern district attorney's office and the release on personal recognizance sought by Rintala's lawyers.

Rintala has been on trial three times for the killing of her wife in their Granby home. The first two trials ended with a hung jury. She was convicted of first-degree murder in the third trial in 2016 and sentenced to life in prison, but the [conviction was overturned](#) by the state Supreme Judicial Court in September.

The state's highest court ruled the trial judge erred by allowing testimony from a supposed expert on paint drying. Cochrane Rintala's body was found covered with paint.

In addition to setting bail, Carey allowed Rintala to reside in Narragansett, Rhode Island, at the home of her parents and her 14-year-old daughter, provided she wears a tracking device and abides by a 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. home curfew. She is also barred from seeking a passport, and agreed to waive her right to an extradition hearing.

When Carey announced his conditions of release, an audible sigh of relief could be heard from among the several family members packed into the courtroom.

Rintala, who has been held in state prison in Framingham, entered the courtroom in prison denim, her arms in handcuffs and her feet shackled. Her red hair was tied up in a ponytail. She showed no emotion when bail was granted.

In the hallway afterward, family members hugged and cried tears of joy.

Rintala's step-father, Carl Montagna, said the family was ecstatic that she was granted bail. "Just to get her home. That's what this was all about, just to get her home."

He said they were hoping she would be granted bail, as she had been previously, and were still relieved when it happened.

He said the family hopes that prosecutors will drop the charges against her before they launch a fourth trial.

"You have to understand there was never one piece of evidence that pointed toward Cara. Everything was circumstantial," he said.

He said prosecutors had two other suspects they could have prosecuted for the murder, but instead focused on Rintala.

Assistant District Attorney Steven E. Gagne, speaking with reporters afterward, said there are no plans to drop the charges.

“We came into this hearing ready for a trial, and remain ready. It’s not as important where she spends the next year and a half until the fourth trial,” he said. “We’re focusing on the next trial and securing the right outcome.”

He said he has spoken with the family of Cochrane Rintala and they support going ahead with a trial.

“They’re willing to see it through. They have not asked us to drop the charges,” he said.

He said the two people Montagna spoke of were investigated thoroughly and ruled out as suspects. Each had a solid alibi for the time of the murder.

“They are not suspects; they are red herrings,” he said.

Prosecutors wanted Rintala to remain in Massachusetts if granted bail, but defense lawyer Chauncy Wood argued it would be a hardship, both to his client but also to her family. Both of her parents are 79 years old and have been caring for Rintala’s daughter since she was first charged with murder in 2013.

“Not to be overly dramatic, but it has essentially robbed them of their retirement,” Wood said. “(Rintala’s) goal and her plan is to go live with her parents and be the mother to her daughter, starting right away, that she hasn’t been able to be for the last eight years.”

Carey originally ordered Rintala transferred back to the Western Massachusetts Women’s Correctional Center in Chicopee until the bail could be posted. Wood said the family would be able to post the amount by the afternoon. Carey granted Wood’s request that she be held in a holding cell in the courthouse instead.

