

Lindsay Clancy: Mom on Trial for Killing Her Children

INSIDE THE SHOCKING

CASE



The Clancy children—Cora, 5, Dawson, 3, and baby Callan—in 2022. Above: the family's former house in Duxbury, Mass.

DEFENDANT AND SUPPORTER
Lindsay Clancy at Plymouth Superior Court in Plymouth, Mass., on July 22. Inset: Patrick Clancy on the witness stand on July 27.



On the warm morning of July 31, in the seaside town of Duxbury, Mass., a large bus flanked by a police SUV and officers on motorcycles came to a stop in front of 47 Summer Street. As motorists paused to watch, a judge, 18 jurors and alternates, and attorneys and court officers slowly entered the side door and began to tour the site of a tragedy that has gripped the nation. Inside the idyllic blue house on Jan. 24, 2023, Lindsay Clancy killed her three young children—Cora, 5, Dawson, 3, and Callan, 8 months—and then attempted to kill herself. The jurors went into the finished basement where Lindsay had strangled her children using exercise bands while her husband, Patrick Clancy, ran errands. And they saw the upstairs bedroom where Lindsay cut her wrists and throat and jumped out of a window, landing in the yard where Patrick found her before calling 911 and discovering their kids' bodies in the basement. "Oh my God, oh my God," he screamed to responding officers that evening. "She killed the kids!"

Now Lindsay, 36—who,

IN A COURT NEAR BOSTON, JURORS WILL DECIDE WHO'S TO BLAME AFTER LINDSAY CLANCY STRANGLED HER CHILDREN—CORA, 5, DAWSON, 3, AND CALLAN, 8 MONTHS. NOW REMARRIED, DAD PATRICK CLANCY IS STANDING BY HIS EX-WIFE

By **CHRIS SPARGO**

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: HATTY STONE; HEADSHOT BY GROOMING/STYLING: HIRSH/DAVID TTY IMAGES; USA TODAY; BOSTON GLOBE; GARY CORNELL; THE PATRICK CLANCY CASE



A MODEL FAMILY

1. Lindsay with Cora (left) and Dawson at home in Duxbury, Mass., ca. 2020.
2. With Cora on the beach.
3. When Lindsay (with newborn Callan in 2022) was pregnant with her youngest, "she was always saying how happy she was," says her lawyer.
4. Patrick (with family in January 2022) wrote in a statement: "I took so much pride in being Lindsay's husband and a dad to Cora, Dawson and Callan."

according to her lawyer Kevin Reddington, was paralyzed from the waist down by her jump and has spent more than three years in a mental health institution—is fighting in a Massachusetts courtroom to avoid prison, having pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity. When her dramatic trial on triple first-degree murder charges began on July 27, Reddington acknowledged in opening statements that his client killed her children but argued that she shouldn't be found criminally responsible for the deaths because she was struggling with postpartum depression after the birth of her youngest child, Callan, in 2022 and suffered from psychosis and hallucinations exacerbated by more than a dozen medicines prescribed by doctors. "This is a woman that did not get the medication, did not get the medical treatment that she so deserved," Reddington said in court.

When her ex-husband Patrick, 38, took the stand as the first witness called by the prosecution, he portrayed Lindsay as a devoted mother

who suffered from debilitating depression and disturbing intrusive thoughts and had voluntarily checked herself into a hospital for treatment. Fighting to maintain his composure, he told jurors that Lindsay called him from Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston a week after the deaths to explain her mindset during the unthinkable killings. "She said she heard a man's voice telling her if she didn't do it now, she would lose her chance, or something like that," said Patrick, who previously told *The New Yorker*, "I wasn't married to a monster—I was married to someone who got sick."

Prosecutors, meanwhile, have argued that Lindsay had tried to amass as many prescriptions from as many doctors as she could and was of sound mind on the day she strangled her three children. Said Plymouth County assistant district attorney Shanan Buckingham during her opening statement: "This is a woman who acted intentionally, rationally and swiftly to accomplish a very specific goal: to kill."



It was another warm July day back in 2013 when Patrick Clancy and Lindsay Musgrove went on their first date after being set up by Patrick's sister and cousin. Lindsay, who grew up in Connecticut and moved to Boston to work as a labor and delivery nurse at Massachusetts General Hospital, and Patrick, raised in Scituate, Mass., just outside Boston, and working in telecommunications, hit it off from the start. On New Year's Eve of 2015, Patrick

'OH MY GOD... OH MY GOD. SHE KILLED THE KIDS!'

—PATRICK CLANCY, IN 911 CALL

proposed, and they married on Dec. 3, 2016, near Lindsay's hometown. The couple wasted little time starting a family, welcoming their first child, Cora, in 2017, followed by Dawson two years later. Their youngest son, Callan, was born in May 2022.

By then Lindsay and Patrick had already purchased their three-bedroom home in Duxbury. Neighbors Gary and Karen Malloy remember meeting Patrick when he dropped by, with little Cora in his arms, to inquire about building a fence around the property for his daughter's safety. "He looked so happy when he was outside playing with those kids," Gary recalls. Gary and Karen knew Patrick was married but never knew his wife's name until the night in January 2023 when they turned on their television while on a trip to Phoenix and saw that their neighbor had tried to die by suicide after killing her kids.

Lindsay had experienced anxiety after the births of both Cora and Dawson, according to court filings. It would often intensify as her maternity leave was about to end and she prepared to return to work. But after the birth of Callan, the anxiety quickly became unmanageable as Lindsay found herself in the throes of postpartum depression, Patrick testified in court. With no end in sight, her attorneys say, Lindsay decided to see a psychiatrist in an attempt to address her deteriorating mental health. Doctors prescribed drugs. Patrick testified at Lindsay's trial, and when they did not work, different drugs were prescribed as she continued to struggle. By January 2023 Lindsay had been prescribed more than a dozen medications, including Zoloft, Prozac, Valium, Ambien, Ativan, trazodone and Seroquel, according to the wrongful-death and medical-malpractice lawsuit Patrick filed on behalf of his children's estates against some of the doctors and medical facilities where Lindsay was treated.

The drugs did little to help, he claims. Lindsay experienced "horrible intrusive thoughts" after taking the Valium and Seroquel, according to a journal she kept at the time. She then sought treatment at a day program for mothers experiencing postpartum depression and, when that proved ineffective, checked herself into a mental health facility for a five-day stay, Patrick testified in court.

Three weeks after leaving that facility, Lindsay sent Patrick out to get dinner and medicine for Cora. "She was having one of her best days," Patrick testified in court (see timeline). He returned home less than an hour later to find his wife had leaped from their bedroom window after slitting

ONE OF THEIR 'BEST' DAYS TURNED TRAGIC

JAN. 24, 2023
Just after noon, as Patrick worked in his home office, Lindsay sent this photo of Dawson (left) and Cora making a snowman.



JAN. 24, 5:54 p.m.
Lindsay asked Patrick to pick up a meal at Threes, a restaurant in Plymouth, Mass., several miles from the family's home.



JAN. 24, 6:09 p.m.
When he got home, Lindsay was lying face up on the ground below this second-story window. "She said, 'I tried to kill myself,'" Patrick testified.



JAN. 24, 6:15 p.m.
In the basement Patrick found the children with exercise bands (like this one, seen with medical equipment) knotted around their necks.



JAN. 25, 2023
The next day, as investigators swarmed the Clancy house, Lindsay, now partially paralyzed, was taken by police to a Boston hospital.

12/8 5mg valium 25mg seroquel - slept well 9-5 few wake ups feeling very depressed & intrusive thoughts today

12/9 5mg valium 100mg seroquel - slept well horrible intrusive thoughts

12/10 25mg valium - 200 seroquel - slept well horrible thoughts in AM

200 seroquel - slept well

Lindsay Clancy's journal, December 2022

WHAT IS POSTPARTUM PSYCHOSIS?

Helen Marlo, dean of Notre Dame de Namur University's School of Psychology, answers mental health questions that have emerged in Lindsay Clancy's trial.

What's the difference between postpartum depression and postpartum psychosis?

They are different, but some symptoms may overlap. Postpartum depression is more common, and yet mothers who are depressed can sometimes have psychotic thoughts, like "My baby's an alien" or "My breast milk is poison." But those thoughts are fleeting and don't change the mother's perception of reality. When someone has postpartum psychosis, they might be struggling with mood and depression, but the key symptom is a profound change in their perception of reality, often expressed through delusion and hallucinations.

How are the conditions normally treated?

Every case is different. Most research says the best outcomes for people taking medications occur when psychotherapy and medication are integrated. Medications can be essential but, generally speaking, should be managed

closely and by a medical professional. Can someone have postpartum psychosis without the people around them knowing about it? People have this idea that if one is struggling with psychosis, then they're not able to function normally, and that's a great misunderstanding. I've worked with people with psychoses who struggle to keep it in their private world. They continue doing so-called normal things they already know how to do.

Commentators have questioned Patrick Clancy's role in his wife's mental health struggles.

Variables such as marital conflict and financial, parenting and work stress get magnified in prenatal and perinatal psychological conditions.

Prosecutor Jennifer Sprague held a bag of Lindsay's medicines on July 27.



her throat and wrists. He quickly called 911, and a few minutes later, Officer Brian Josephine of the Duxbury Police Department arrived on the scene. Only then did Patrick leave his wife's side to go check on the children, who Lindsay had told him were in the basement. Josephine testified that moments later he heard anguished cries coming from inside the house. He rushed inside to find Patrick standing over Dawson's body. "He looked up, and he screamed, 'She killed the f---ing kids!'" Josephine testified.

Dawson and his sister were pronounced dead soon after arriving at the hospital, but Callan fought for two and a half days. "Callan spent his last moments in my arms before he passed," Patrick would later say as he raised funds for the nurses who "gave me a little more time with my boy." Lindsay was still recovering in the hospital from the cuts and fall when Patrick released a statement supporting his wife. "Our marriage was wonderful and diametrically grew stronger as her condition rapidly worsened," Patrick wrote. "I took as much pride in being her husband as I did in being a father and felt persistently lucky to have her in my life." Soon after, Lindsay was charged with three counts of first-degree murder, and a little more than three years later, jurors will decide her fate.

Unlike in most murder trials, the material facts of the case have never been in dispute. The narratives, however, could not be more different. In his opening argument, Reddington said that an over-medicated Lindsay slipped from a state of postpartum depression into one of postpartum psychosis (see sidebar). Amid her disconnection from reality, she experienced auditory hallucinations, Reddington said, including a voice that said, "Kill the children so you can kill yourself."

Prosecutor Buckingham countered that Lindsay "coldly and calculatedly executed her children," that she only ever took two or three medications at the same time and that the wounds on her wrist and neck were all superficial, suggesting Lindsay faked the suicide attempt that paralyzed her.

Despite Patrick's very public support for the defendant, prosecutors made the decision

'THIS IS A YOUNG WOMAN THAT TRIED VERY HARD TO GET THE HELP SHE NEEDED'

—CLANCY ATTORNEY KEVIN REDDINGTON



HIS NEW WIFE

Patrick filed for divorce and moved to N.Y.C. in 2023. There he met Dr. Rachel Danis, an infertility specialist who grew up on Long Island and attended Barnard College before studying medicine at Drexel University in Philadelphia. In February 2024 she and Patrick appeared together on Instagram. The couple, both avid runners and sailors, have largely kept their relationship private, but Danis met and worked with Patrick's sisters and other family members on building a playground in memory of Cora, Dawson and Callan in Duxbury, Mass., in 2025. The couple were married in 2026 and live in Manhattan.

to call him as their first witness in the case, and he testified over the course of two days in unwavering support of Lindsay, whom he divorced soon after the deaths of their three children. Patrick then relocated to New York City and by February 2024 was in a relationship with Dr. Rachel Danis, a reproductive specialist at a Brooklyn fertility practice. She moved into Patrick's Upper East Side apartment the following year, and the couple were married in April 2026 (see box).

On the witness stand on July 27, though, Patrick was questioned bluntly by lead prosecutor Jennifer Sprague about whether he paid attention to his wife's struggles and ever thought it was



DEVASTATED COMMUNITY

A mourner left flowers at a memorial outside the Clancys' Duxbury home on Jan. 26, 2023. Right: Patrick ran the Boston Marathon in his slain children's honor in 2024.

necessary to separate the kids from their mother. "It was confusing. ... I never saw Lindsay harm the kids," he replied.

Sitting nearby in the wheelchair she now uses, Lindsay sobbed, sometimes audibly, throughout Patrick's testimony about her children. Regardless of the outcome of the trial, when the jury ultimately determines who is to blame for the deaths of Cora, Dawson and Callan, there will be no winners, according to Reddington. "She's not going to get up miraculously and walk out of this courtroom; she'll be paralyzed for the rest of her life. She's living her own hell," he told the court. "She knows what happened with those kids, and she wanted to die."

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health challenges, or just needs to talk, call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org 24/7.

PeopleApp

People Crime Files
Read Patrick's lawsuit
against Lindsay's
"negligent" doctors,
now in the app.

