

AZ Insider: Realtor's Family Murdered? Gruesome Details Unfold

Written by Written by Kathy Shayna Shocket

Wednesday, 06 June 2012 11:48 - Last Updated Monday, 19 February 2024 16:43

Kathy Shayna Shocket reports the sad news.



The unfolding details of the murder of a beautiful family involved in their school and temple ...

James Butwin, 47, and **Yafit Butwin**, 40, had been going through a divorce since September 2011 and although the couple were still living together and celebrated James' birthday together Friday night - there was something much darker going on behind closed doors. Friends and family and members of the Jewish community are in shock that the bodies of the attractive family of five were found burnt beyond recognition in their car in the desert.

James Butwin, a commercial real estate entrepreneur and Yafit Butwin, an interior designer; **Matthew, 7, Malissa, 16, and Daniel, 14**, were involved in their temple and schools in Tempe, Arizona. James was on the board of **Temple Emanuel** in Tempe. **Yafit** was a native **Israeli** and immigrated to the United States after meeting James.

Crime Scene in the home

The outside of the Butwin's upscale 4,000 sq. foot Tempe home is beautifully landscaped and maintained, but inside police say they found bullet casings and blood in several rooms.

Also, James sent a letter to a business associate last week with the key to the family home, advising that the acquaintance to check on the Butwins' home and how to continue to run James' company.

So, there is speculation of this being a murder –suicide because of the divorce, financial difficulties, and that James had been battling a brain tumor and financial debt, some business associates say the debt was millions of dollars. In a bizarre turn of circumstances, the Butwin's SUV was spotted speeding down the Arizona interstate at 4:30 a.m. Saturday and chased by the Border Patrol. In fact, whoever was driving the Butwin car, managed to evade the Border Patrol and the smoking car wasn't found until hours later.

One victim was found in the backseat, and four in the rear compartment.

Controversy

The crime scene in the desert caused lots of controversy surrounding Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babue's quick reaction to publicly announce this was the result of the U.S. -Mexico border violence. Although Babue told even the national press that this was the drug cartel - Tempe police say there is no evidence of that. And very, very sadly, Tempe police are saying it looks more apparent that it was a murder -suicide and that James Butwin murdered his family before taking his own life.

I'll keep you updated on this tragic story.

Kathy Shayna Shocket is a freelance Reporter, Photographer and TV Field Producer based in Phoenix. She can be reached at redkarpetgirl@aol.com