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Detective suspended for romancing mail-order bride

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Article Text:

A North Miami Beach detective has been disciplined after he romanced a Russian woman who was married to a man he arrested in a murder-for-hire plot.

A three-week suspension was handed down this week after the department finished a probe into Detective Edward Hill's relationship with Anna Gulevitskaya, estranged wife of defendant David Superville.

The detective arrested Superville last year for his alleged role in the 2001 slaying of electronics salesman James Duarte, believed assassinated on the order of a jealous Brazillian businessman.

Hill, who has dogged the case for years, did not forge his relationship with Gulevitskaya until several months after Superville's arrest, police said.

The drama began Aug. 13, 2001, when a barrage of bullets cut down Duarte as he left his office, 13899 Biscayne Blvd.

Detectives identified the suspected mastermind as Ivan Amaral, a Brazillian businessman who ran a Miami-Dade import-export business.

Police believe Amaral targeted Duarte because he had dated his former girlfriend, Sara Cabral. Duarte and Cabral met on Match.com.

Amaral paid his house painter, Superville, and a man named Mark McKay at least \$32,000 to follow Duarte for about six weeks.

The two bought and used a blue Ford Taurus, painting it white. It was later found near the crime scene.

To avoid leaving an electronic trail, they used pre-paid cellphones during the operation. Superville even bought a how-to book on being a "private dick."

A few days after they reported his comings and goings, police believe another Brazilian, Denilson Santos, shot Duarte with a long-barreled .22 caliber pistol.

Hill said Superville admitted knowing harm would come to Duarte. Superville's defense attorney, Andrew Rier, denies that.

Superville, who is not accused of pulling the trigger or being at the scene, is charged with second-degree murder.

After the murder, Amaral -- who earlier beat a murder rap in Brazil -- and Cabral quickly flew to their native country, boarding a plane hastily with no luggage. Santos is believed to have returned too.

Rier insists his client was just an amateur private eye who never knew Duarte would be killed.

Superville, 46, was arrested in May 2007. McKay was arrested but the murder charge was dropped when he agreed to cooperate.

Superville calls Gulevitskaya a mail order bride, a term commonly used for women who come here after arranging marriages to American citizens. Now, that is done mostly via Internet.

Superville, who has a son from a previous marriage, met Gulevitskaya, 30, through AmericanSingles.com.

They wed in Miami in August 2006 -- at the "one-stop" clerk of courts located in a Davie car dealership. 'Not such a memorable day,' she later told investigators.

She said the marriage was immediately troubled. She claimed Superville "acted inappropriately, crazy and violent" -- even punching her when she refused to kiss him in public.

Superville denies that. He said: "She's just saying that because she needs to prove domestic violence so she can stay in the country."

After he was arrested, Superville "felt his marriage had the potential of getting repaired once his criminal case was cleared up," according to an internal affairs report.

Superville, who had no previous criminal record, was jailed for 89 days before a judge released him on house arrest pending trial.

A hearing is set for Aug. 11 before Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Rosa Rodriguez.

Rier predicts that the case will fall apart soon.

"Credibility of the detective is critical to this case as there is no physical evidence, DNA or eyewitness testimony," Rier said.

After his release on bond, Gulevitskaya filed for a restraining order. However, in late February, Superville discovered romantic e-mails between Gulevitskaya and Hill.

He and Rier complained to internal affairs.

"It looks like he was more interested in getting his woman than getting his man," said Superville, a boisterous former U.S. Air Force mechanic.

Details of the romance emerged in court documents and a final police report released this week.

Gulevitskaya initially called Hill after her husband's arrest because of financial and other difficulties.

Alone in the United States and feeling deceived by her husband, she told investigators, "all you can trust is a person in uniform." She later called Hill her "hero."

In late 2007, Gulevitskaya began seeing Hill, breaking up with another boyfriend she had after Superville's arrest. She started an asphalt sealcoating business -- which she learned from Superville, who runs his own sealcoating company.

Hill, who said he believed Gulevitskaya had filed for divorce (she hadn't, then), began helping arranging bids and referrals.

He also lent her thousands of dollars to start the company, which was later paid back. The business was incorporated with his home address.

The pair, along with Gulevitskaya's daughter, traveled to the Atlantis resort in the Bahamas. Other trips included St. Augustine, Key West and Jacksonville.

Hill, 49, is a gregarious and decorated detective who joined the department in 1988.

A brief member of the Dallas Cowboys practice squad, Hill is active with the Make-a-Wish foundation and has numerous commendations.

Hill will be suspended for conduct unbecoming of an officer and failing to report outside employment. He will be placed on desk duty to work only his remaining cases before retiring in November.

"He realizes he has to pay for his mistakes," said North Miami Beach Chief Raphael Hernandez Jr. "He was remorseful, he was embarrassed about what happened and embarrassed about the negative attention he brought to his agency and his co-workers."

Hill stressed he never talked to Gulevitskaya about Superville.

"I don't discuss anything about this case to her. She doesn't know anything," he said in a June deposition.

When rumors began circulating within the police department, Hill told internal affairs Sgt. Rick Silberman, he scaled back the romance.

They canceled a planned cruise. He also bought two tickets to accompany her to Russia, but canceled his fare.

Gulevitskaya, who is in Russia now, is paying him back the cost of the flight. They remain friends. Copyright (c) 2008 The Miami Herald