



Raymond Ponke

Dennis Lutz

Jackie Ponke

## Lawsuit from page 1A

[Bredin] ... It's nothing personal against him," said attorney Robert Gagniak, who represents the estate of Jackie Ponke. "I have a client. I have a little girl who doesn't have a mother or a father."

Jackie Ponke worked for Bredin for 18 years. After her murder, family members characterized the dentist as being something of a father figure to her.

Bredin said he tried to protect Jackie Ponke after she received threats from her husband, from whom she was estranged.

Bredin had curtains removed at the Freedom Road dental office so employees could see who was approaching. Bredin also planned an escape route.

Jackie Ponke's attacker entered through an unlocked door and beat her 40 times with a claw hammer on the January Saturday morning. Bredin and Jackie Ponke were the only ones working that day.

Bredin said he tried to stop the man during the attack, but saw that Jackie Ponke was already dead. Then Bredin took the patient who was in the office and escaped to a neighbor's house as the man continued to beat Jackie Ponke.

"He took the duty on to protect her. He didn't," Gagniak said. "He left the door unlocked, and he had only one person working with him on that Saturday."

"He knew he was coming after her."

**"It's just sick to read those things, that I was negligent. I think it would hurt anyone. It makes it sound like I just stood there while he hit her 40 times."**

Dr. Alan Bredin

Bredin said he's not surprised by the suit. He received the papers Friday.

"It's just sick to read those things, that I was negligent," Bredin said. "I think it would hurt anyone."

"It makes it sound like I just stood there while he hit her 40 times."

Dennis Lutz, administrator of the estate, could not be reached for comment. Dennis Lutz has been awarded temporary custody of Ashley Ponke.

His brother, Stephen Lutz, said he's not involved with the suit.

"They're not suing him; they're suing his insurance company," Stephen Lutz said. "I have nothing to do with it."

Bredin said worker's compensation claims, specifically the death benefit for Jackie Ponke, were denied. "They said it was not job-related," Bredin said.

The dentist said his insurance company also denied claims for damages to his office and subsequent therapy for employees after

the murder. He estimates losing \$25,000 income while repairing and redecorating the office.

Bredin said he understands the family's frustration that led to the suit.

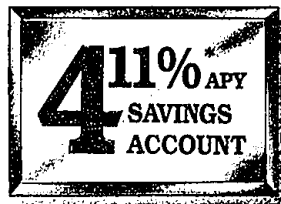
The legal proceedings are still troublesome, Bredin added, especially having his name next to Raymond Ponke's on the suit.

"That's the worst part of it," Bredin said. "That's just unbelievable. Like we're classified together."

Gagniak wouldn't rule out the possibility of more civil action against others. The estate of Jackie Ponke was successful in freezing Raymond Ponke's assets, including a pension. Raymond Ponke's trial is set for Sept. 12 before Judge Jessica Cooper at Oakland County Circuit Court.

"We think there was more than one party wrong in this situation," Gagniak said. "At this time, there's nothing else out there. Whether we pursue it or not, I don't want to close those doors."

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