

Why did Brian Walshe plead guilty to lesser charges ahead of his murder trial? Legal experts weigh in.

By [Travis Andersen](#) Globe Staff, Updated November 19, 2025, 1:02 p.m.



Brian Walshe appears in Norfolk Superior Court on Tuesday beside his attorney, Kelli Porges. MARK STOCKWELL/POOL/BH

The decision by [Brian Walshe](#), the [Cohasset](#) man who [allegedly killed and dismembered his wife](#) in 2023, [to plead guilty to two lesser charges before the start](#)

[of his murder trial](#) appears to be a tactical move aimed at blunting some of the more harrowing details of the case, legal specialists said.

Just before the start of jury selection Monday, Walshe, 50, pleaded guilty in Norfolk Superior Court to charges of conveying a human body and lying to investigators in the death of [his wife, Ana Walshe](#), 39.

His guilty plea means he'll only stand trial on the remaining murder charge once a full jury is seated. Prosecutors allege that he killed [Ana Walshe](#) in the predawn hours of Jan. 1, 2023, and then dismembered her, leaving the remains in various locations.

"It's difficult to know what defenses they are setting up, and I certainly do not know," said [Jack Lu](#), a retired Superior Court judge, when asked about the strategy behind the guilty pleas. "But it seems likely that they at least partially have the following in mind: Always concede 'bad facts' when the prosecutor is going to prove them anyway, and the bad facts do not severely damage your case," Lu said.

Prosecutors allege that after the murder, Walshe made a number of [disturbing Google searches](#) on his son's tablet, including "how to embalm a body," "10 ways to dispose of a dead body if you really need to," "how to stop a body from decomposing," and "how long before a body starts to smell."

[The macabre searches](#) were made between 4:55 a.m. and 5:47 a.m. on New Year's Day, prosecutors said.

"Besides avoiding fighting a battle over bad facts that you are going to lose anyway, by doing this the defense establishes credibility with the jury," Lu said of the guilty pleas. "Few things hurt with the jury more than contesting every bad fact. Trial lawyers in a jury trial are negotiating a verdict with the jury. Outlandishly contesting bad facts can damage the lawyers' negotiating position with the jury."

Lu said he also suspects “there is something deeper going on here, because the defense could have just conceded those charges in their opening statement if all they wanted to do was concede the unwinnable.”

Lu’s comments were echoed by [Martin G. Weinberg](#), a [Boston defense attorney](#) who said the turn of events could pave the way to Walshe taking the stand in his own defense, a rarity in murder trials.

“I have no personal knowledge but I would assume, from experience, that his counsel believed that the charges he [pleaded] to were indefensible, that they hoped it would lead to a reduction of the focus on the ugly post-death offenses, and that they could successfully argue to the jury, probably based on their client’s testimony, that what occurred was neither a first- or second-degree murder but instead either an accident or the result of reckless but not malicious misconduct,” Weinberg said by email.

Jury selection in the Walshe trial is ongoing.

“Of course I don’t know exactly what evidence the prosecution has, but it appears that the strongest evidence against the defendant is regarding the charges of conveying the body and misleading the police, but they don’t appear to know the details of the actual murder/death,” [Melinda L. Thompson](#), a [Boston defense attorney](#) and former prosecutor, said in a statement.

Now, Thompson continued, “the defense can argue that the defendant admits he panicked and disposed of the body and misled the police but that he did not kill her or did not mean to kill her. They can argue that it was self-defense or an accident in an attempt to avoid a mandatory life sentence and convince the jury it was second-degree murder or manslaughter.”

Mark J. Geragos, [a defense lawyer in Los Angeles](#) who has represented a host of celebrities, said he felt Walshe was trying to take the focus away from “very prejudicial information.”

“Appears that he’s trying to eliminate some very prejudicial information from being relevant to the proceedings and focus on beating the charge that is really the whole focus of his defense,” he said.

[Carol Erskine](#), meanwhile, a retired Worcester County juvenile court judge, drew parallels between Walshe’s strategy and a similar tactic deployed by a notorious defendant in New Hampshire.

“Brian Walshe & [Adam Montgomery](#) both pleaded guilty just prior to trial of charges related to human remains,” Erskine posted on X on Tuesday.

Adam Montgomery was [convicted in New Hampshire](#) of killing his young daughter, Harmony.

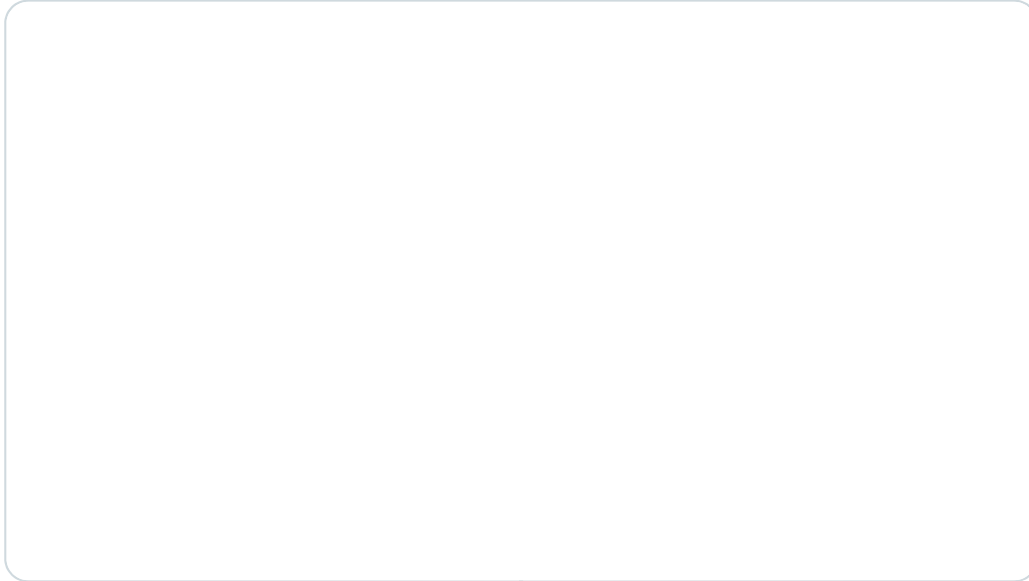
“Montgomery abused and hid Harmony’s remains,” Erskine said. “Walshe removed/hid Ana’s remains. The plea -- A desperate tactic that ultimately helped to put Adam Montgomery away for life.”

Carol Erskine 

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Brian Walshe & Adam Montgomery both pleaded guilty just prior to trial of charges related to human remains. Montgomery-abused and hid Harmony's remains. Walshe removed/hid Ana's remains. The plea-- A desperate tactic that ultimately helped to put Adam Montgomery away for life.



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