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Joint Rites In Cop Pair Slay-suicide

BY MICHELE MCPHEE AND ALICE MCQUILLAN
Friday, October 23, 1998

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The Staten Island detective who fatally shot his cop wife and then killed himself was waked with her yesterday to spare their children two services, relatives said.

Detective Fred Jesselli, 47, and Police Officer Monica Jesselli, 38, also will be mourned at the same Catholic Mass and buried side by side.

"The kids wanted them to be together," said one relative, who didn't want her name used. "They all loved each other."

The couple's children, Derek, 15, and Erica, 12, were among the mourners at the Casey Funeral Home yesterday, where open coffins for husband and wife were placed head to head.

Erica was in the family's home when Jesselli pumped several rounds into his wife and then turned the gun on himself Tuesday. She discovered their bodies and ran screaming from the house.

"The mood was so sad, so quiet," said the Rev. James Dorney, the police chaplain for Staten Island, who attended yesterday's wake.

Last month, there were separate funerals and burials after city cop Patrick Fitzgerald, 38, shot and killed his wife, Leanne, 38, and their two young children, then committed suicide in their Orange County home.

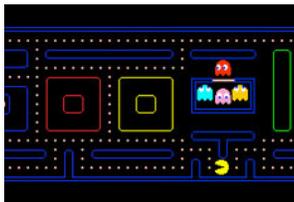
On Staten Island, Derek's hockey teammates paid their respects, as did fellow cops. Police sources said marital troubles and a move toward separation by Monica Jesselli apparently led to the shooting.

The husband and wife worked in different Staten Island precincts.

"This is the beginning of the conclusion to a very sad tragedy," said Monica Jesselli's commanding officer, Capt. Ray Bischoff of the 123rd Precinct.

The funeral will be held tomorrow at St. Christopher's Church, 130 Midland Ave., with burial to follow at Moravian Cemetery.

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