

Family killed in 'cold revenge for loss of face'

Partners fell out over Chinese medicine business

David Sanderson

Two schoolgirls cowering in their bedrooms were "massacred" by a business associate of their parents who had "lost face" and wanted to exact bloody revenge, a court was told yesterday.

Anxiang Du killed all four members of the Ding family, stabbing them a



Anxiang Du admits killing the Dings and their daughters

total of 51 times after losing a court dispute involving the parents that resulted in him facing a £88,000 legal bill.

The murders were a "considered act of revenge executed in an unbelievably calm and cold-blooded manner", the prosecutor, William Harbage, QC, told Northampton Crown Court at the opening of Mr Du's trial.

After killing Jifeng "Jeff" Ding, a university lecturer, and his wife, Ge

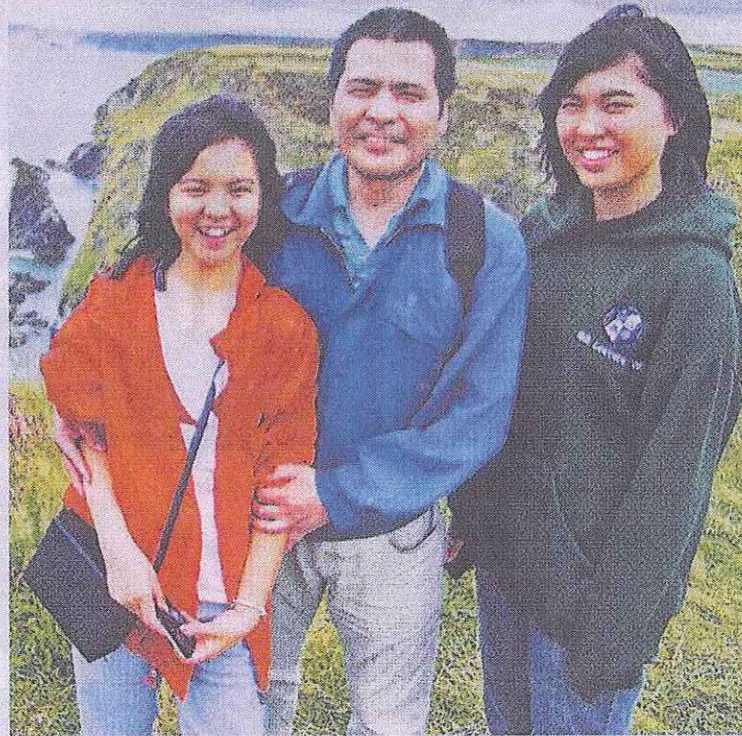
"Helen" Chui, in the kitchen of their home in Wootton, Northamptonshire, Mr Du went upstairs and stabbed 18-year-old Xing "Nancy" 11 times and 12-year-old Alice 4 times.

Jurors at Northampton Crown Court were told that Mr Du, 54, admits killing the family of four in April 2011, but would possibly argue that it was manslaughter through diminished responsibility or loss of control.

After the killings, on April 29, 2011, Mr Du allegedly attempted to track down Paul Delaney, a businessman who had sided with the Dings in the dispute. Having failed to find Mr Delaney at his home near Banbury, he drove in the Ding family's car to London, where he caught a bus to Paris.

He then travelled to Tangier, Morocco. He was arrested at a building site in Morocco in July 2012 and was extradited to Britain in February this year.

Mr Harbage told jurors yesterday that Mr Du and his wife, Can Chen, had begun a Chinese medicine business with Mr Ding, a lecturer at Manchester University, and Mrs Ding in 1999, shortly after he had arrived in



Jifeng Ding with his daughters Alice, 12, left, and Xing or "Nancy", 18, who, along with their mother, Ge Chui, were all killed by Anxiang Du in April 2011

Britain. The prosecutor said the relationship soon turned sour, leading to "protracted and acrimonious" litigation.

The civil courts initially ruled in the Du family's favour, but by 2011, by which time Mr Delaney had become involved in proceedings, the pendulum had swung back in the Dings' favour.

On April 28, 2011, the day before the Ding family members were killed, Mr

Du was served with an injunction that, effectively, was forcing him to pay £88,000 legal costs to Mr Delaney.

Mr Harbage said this was the "catalyst for the horrific events of the following day". He told jurors: "It was obvious to him that he had lost; he faced ruin; there was no other legitimate course for him to take to fight his case. And so he resorted to violence, to murder, to avenge himself of the people who had

caused him such grief. He did so not just by killing them, Mr and Mrs Ding, but also by murdering their daughters." He added that Mr Du "had lost face... he felt humiliated and angry".

Jurors heard that on the morning of April 29 Mr Du had left his Coventry home, left a "farewell" note for his wife and son at their business in Birmingham in which he wrote, "everyone has to say farewell one day". Mr Harbage told jurors that, "we do not know for sure" whether Mrs Chen knew about her husband's "murderous plan".

The same day, Mr Du travelled to the Ding family home in Wootton.

The court was told that in the midst of the killing spree, Alice Ding's mobile phone was used to call 999. The BT operator could "hear the sound of female screams". However, the call ended abruptly and the bodies were not discovered at the house for two days.

Jurors saw images of the Ding family's bodies in the house: the parents were found in the kitchen, while Alice was found on a bed upstairs with Nancy on the floor beside her. Mr Ding had been stabbed 23 times and his wife 13 times.

In court the Dings were described as "hard-working, decent people". The parents had arrived from China about 20 years ago and met at Southampton University. Both girls were talented violinists, while Nancy aspired to go to the University of Cambridge.

Mr Harbage said that Mr Du might argue that he had had a diagnosis of depression shortly before the killings. He said, however, "Any depression he may have had is irrelevant to that anger and desire for vengeance. He decided to kill their children to fully avenge himself of the wrong which he perceived they had done to him."

The trial continues.