

# Los Angeles Tribune

Thursday, July 25, 2002

## Forensics Expert Calls Painseeker Murder "Conspiracy"

*Ex-employee Helps Police Draw Motive, Timeline*

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LOS ANGELES - Assistant District Attorney Thomas Andrews fired a one-two punch in his prosecution of Laura Douglass in the Painseeker Murder Trial in Los Angeles Superior Court on Wednesday. After forcing a hostile Geoffrey MacIntyre to testify on Tuesday that Douglass lied repeatedly about being at the scene of the crime at the time of the murder, Andrews introduced one of Douglass' ex-employees and an expert from the LAPD crime lab to confirm the prosecution's case.

Laura Douglass and bodyguard Sharon Wolfe, who is being charged separately in the crime, are each accused of the first-degree murder of Raychel Wagner, Douglass' best friend and Wolfe's client. The prosecution alleges that the two conspired to murder Wagner after Douglass learned of an affair between Wagner and Douglass' lover, Ken Kincaid. Wolfe, who was allegedly hired by Douglass as a bodyguard/spy for Wagner, is believed to have started the attack while Douglass waited in the kitchen to finish the murder by slashing Wagner repeatedly with a broken bottle.

Testifying first on Wednesday was Stacy Butkus, a waitress/bartender at Safehaven, the bar formerly owned by Douglass. Butkus, who was on duty the night of the murder, testified that she had witnessed the events between Douglass, Wolfe, and Geoffrey MacIntyre. She stated that Wolfe and MacIntyre walked into the bar after 7:30 p.m. and immediately spoke with Douglass.

Douglass later pulled her aside and mentioned that both were VIPs and should be treated as such.

Butkus stated that Douglass and Wolfe had a conversation at the bar at approximately 10:15 p.m. and less than an hour later, Douglass told Butkus to take charge and left without explaining where she was going. Shortly after that, Wolfe came to her and gave her \$100 to take care of MacIntyre while she was gone. She also said that Wolfe and Douglass returned around 11:40 p.m. at which time, Wolfe left with MacIntyre.

When asked about the possibility that the murder weapon - a bottle of tequila - could have been taken from the bar, Butkus answered that it could have because Douglass did not keep a regular inventory.

Butkus was also asked about Douglass' relationship with Ken Kincaid, CEO of Terror Trax, the label Raychel Wagner had signed with. Butkus stated that she had seen the two together numerous times. Kincaid would occasionally show up at the bar after he had signed Wagner to a contract. When asked how she knew that Douglass and Kincaid were involved, she stated that she could tell from the way they acted together, that Douglass often had a hard time making friends. She could tell that these two were intimate from their body language.

On cross examination, defense attorney Les Levin pounced on Butkus' "assumption" of their relationship. He asked her several questions about her ability to read Douglass and Kincaid.

Could she tell how long they were dating? Could she tell how open their relationship was? Could she tell about their mating habits? Butkus maintained that she knew Douglass, and she could tell that the two were intimate, but admitted that she could not tell anything further.

Levin seized the momentum and asked Butkus if she remembered having a conversation with Douglass immediately after Wolfe and MacIntyre left Safehaven. Butkus admitted that she did have one regarding Wolfe paying the \$100. When Levin asked her if Douglass had seemed surprised by the discovery, Butkus admitted that she had.

Levin asked Butkus about her current job, she admitted that she was currently still working at Safehaven. When Levin asked who the current owner of Safehaven was, she answered that it was Lance Wagner. With that, Levin concluded his cross examination.

The prosecution followed up with Lisa Finnegan, a forensics expert with the LAPD. Andrews asked Finnegan if she could confirm the prosecution's case. She said that there was conclusive proof that the scenario established by Detective Kevin Wakefield was correct.

"It was clearly a conspiracy, " she stated.

When asked for proof, Finnegan stated that fingerprints on several of the items of debris at the crime scene indicated that they were handled by the victim, Raychel Wagner, Sharon Wolfe, or both. She re-capped Wakefield's theory and indicated that she believed that there were two separate fights due to the dramatic change in the fighting technique in the kitchen.

She stated that Raychel Wagner died from loss of blood due to the fact that she had been slashed or stabbed 23 times with a broken bottle of Jose Cuervo Gold tequila. She stated that the weapon was ascertained by reconstructing the numerous fragments in the kitchen and from the size and type of wounds on the victim. Finnegan went on to describe many of the wounds as defensive since they were found on her hands and lower arms. She stated that there were also significant wounds on her abdomen, neck, and head.

For the second day of the trial, the prosecution concluded the day's testimony without allowing the defense an opportunity to cross examine the witness until the next day. While he did not voice an objection, Levin, who was anxiously watching the clock near the end of the session, was visibly upset on his way out of court.

"I'll do my talking in court tomorrow, " growled Levin as he left the courthouse.