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Wolfe Testifies For Douglass In Painseeker Murder Trial

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LOS ANGELES -- The Painseeker Murder Trial took a completely unexpected turn on Wednesday when Sharon Wolfe, who also stands accused of the first-degree murder of Raychel Wagner, testified on behalf of alleged co-conspirator Laura Douglass. In a day filled with numerous sidebars requested by Assistant District Attorney Thomas Andrews, Wolfe maintained her innocence and asserted that Laura Douglass could not have committed the crime.

Judge Michael Rodriguez listened to several objections from Andrews prior to allowing Wolfe's testimony. Andrews sat silently as Wolfe began testifying about her professional relationship with Raychel Wagner. When she stated that she was hired anonymously, and even to this day did not know for certain who hired her, Andrews began fidgeting in his chair to the point that defense attorney Les Levin asked Judge Rodriguez to intervene because Andrews was "intentionally distracting the jury from Ms. Wolfe's testimony."

"It was a cheap tactic. . . worthy of a defense attorney," Levin later commented.

Judge Rodriguez called both for a sidebar and twenty minutes later all parties re-entered the courtroom. Despite the time, no party seemed satisfied with the outcome. Regardless, the testimony continued.

Levin asked Wolfe to re-cap her testimony, then proceeded to ask her about the night of the

murder. Wolfe stated that, per Wagner's instructions, she escorted Geoffrey MacIntyre to Douglass' bar, Safehaven. Wolfe noted that an argument had broken out earlier that night between MacIntyre, Wagner, and Wagner's lover and musical collaborator Kyle McAllister. Wagner asked Wolfe to keep tabs on MacIntyre, which was her reason for taking MacIntyre to Safehaven. Wolfe believed that MacIntyre would be easier to control if he was incapacitated. While at Safehaven, Wolfe met Douglass and informed her of the argument.

Later in the evening, Wolfe admitted that she witnessed Douglass leaving the bar, and suspected that she was going to attempt to see Raychel and Kyle. Since Geoffrey was drunk by that point, Wolfe thought it would be better to follow Douglass.

Upon arriving at the apartment complex at 11:20 p.m., Wolfe testified that she witnessed Douglass trying to enter Wagner's apartment by picking the lock, but was unsuccessful. She heard Douglass try to talk to someone through the door, but was again unsuccessful in getting into the apartment. At that point, she witnessed Douglass give up and return to Safehaven.

On cross examination, Assistant District Attorney Andrews attacked Wolfe's credibility as a witness. He noted that Wolfe's defense would be more difficult if Douglass lost her case. He kept pressing his point with Wolfe until Levin objected that Andrews was badgering the witness. A yelling match between Andrews and Levin immediately followed, which forced Judge Rodriguez to again recess while the attorneys met in chambers.

When they returned, moods still had not improved. Andrews again attacked Wolfe's credibility, this time for lying to the police in their investigation. He ironically noted the coincidence that both she and Douglass lied to the police. He loudly asked Wolfe to state why the jury should believe that what she was saying now under oath should be considered the truth. Wolfe admitted that her lie was a lie of convenience. She stated that she believed Kyle McAllister was responsible for the crime, and that if she admitted she was there with Douglass it would cloud the investigation. Andrews again went right at her and told her to admit she was a liar, and again Judge Rodriguez called for a recess and to convene in chambers.

Following that recess, Andrews attempted to connect Wolfe and Douglass as conspirators. He questioned Wolfe on a time when Wagner had been beaten while Wolfe was watching her. Andrews noted that, despite the fact Wagner had suffered numerous serious injuries, Wolfe brought her to Laura Douglass instead of a hospital. Wolfe defended the action by stating it was what Wagner had requested. Andrews questioned her testimony, and mentioned that it was convenient Wagner was not alive to contradict her. This brought Wolfe on the attack. She challenged Andrews to prove that she worked for Douglass. Andrews countered by asking Wolfe who she worked for. When she repeated her testimony that her employer was unknown to her, Andrews asserted that it was therefore possible that Douglass was the person. After a pause, Wolfe admitted it was possible, but not provable.

Despite the rough treatment of Wolfe, Assistant District Attorney Andrews was tentative on challenging her alibi with physical evidence. During the prosecution's case, LAPD forensics expert Lisa Finnegan tied Wolfe to the crime scene by her fingerprints. However, with Wolfe on the stand, Andrews refused to press his case further, possibly attempting to keep from tipping his hand too early in his prosecution of Wolfe, which is scheduled to follow the conclusion of the Douglass trial.

Andrews attempted to hold himself in check following the day's events. Still, on the steps of the courthouse, his anger was evident when asked for comment regarding the legitimacy of Sharon Wolfe's testimony.

"The question isn't whether or not Laura Douglass had a right to call Sharon Wolfe as a witness for her case," conceded Andrews, "The question is whether or not we have to add perjury charges to Sharon Wolfe's trial and if we have to press charges of suborning perjury against either Laura Douglass, Les Levin, or both."

When asked for comment, Levin responded, "He's the [Assistant District Attorney]. He can charge whoever he wants. But if he intends to harass either myself or Ms. Douglass by filing those charges without proof, he had better expect to undergo a JSID [Justice System Integrity Division] investigation. I will not be intimidated by the D.A.'s office."

Mutual threats aside, the appearance of Sharon Wolfe was a shock to those in attendance in Los Angeles Superior Court. A division between the two suspects was evident immediately after charges were filed in February when Wolfe asked to be tried separately, but was scheduled against her wishes to be tried before Douglass. However, in June her trial was postponed until after the Douglass trial. While there were rumors of a possible deal between prosecutors and Wolfe, the prosecution closed its case without calling Wolfe. Still, word around the courthouse stated that Wolfe could have been called as a rebuttal witness for the prosecution.

Wolfe's appearance was clearly a coup for Douglass' high-profile defense attorney Les Levin, who was attached to the case at the last minute. After the prosecution called a defense witness as part of their case, Levin admitted privately he had been looking for a way to catch the prosecution off guard.

He apparently found his way.