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## Painseeker Jury Hears Closing Arguments, Receives Case

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LOS ANGELES – On Friday in Los Angeles Superior Court, the jury in the first Painseeker Murder Trial heard closing arguments from Assistant District Attorneys Thomas Andrews and defense attorney Les Levin. Following their arguments, they received their instructions from Judge Michael Rodriguez and were allowed to begin deliberations on the fate of Laura Douglass.

Douglass is accused of the murder of Raychel Wagner, her best friend and a singer in the process of recording her first album. The prosecution has also charged Wagner's bodyguard, Sharon Wolfe, with first-degree murder, with that trial scheduled to begin at the conclusion of Douglass' trial.

During the prosecution's closing argument, Assistant District Attorney Thomas Andrews stated jealousy and revenge as Laura Douglass' motive.

Andrews said that the murder was the final act in Laura Douglass' "deadly obsession" with Raychel Wagner. He asserted that Douglass was obsessed with controlling Wagner; first with drugs and then with people. When Wagner escaped Douglass' drug trap, Douglass allegedly hired Sharon Wolfe anonymously to serve as Wagner's "bodyguard and spy." Later, Douglass introduced Wagner to Geoffrey MacIntyre with the hope that it would bring Wagner and Douglass closer together.

Andrews reminded the jury that Ken Kincaid, the CEO of the recording company where Wagner worked, was also Laura Douglass' lover. Andrews alleged that Douglass was enraged at discovering an affair between Wagner and Kincaid. After having given so much of herself to help Wagner in her career, Douglass found the affair unforgivable, and employed Sharon Wolfe help to murder Wagner.

The prosecution charges that on the night of August 17, 2000, Douglass and Wolfe used the opportunity of an argument at Terror Trax, Wagner's recording studio, to attack Wagner. Using the testimony of prosecution and defense witnesses, Andrews constructed a timeline for the jury in which the two alleged killers left Douglass' bar, Safehaven, drove to Wagner's apartment, and brought her a bottle of tequila to "cheer her up."

Once inside the apartment, Andrews stated that Wolfe attacked Wagner in the living room area, using items within the room. Meanwhile, Douglass waited in the kitchen with the tequila bottle in case Wagner attempted to escape. When Wagner did enter the kitchen area, Douglass broke the bottle and slashed and stabbed Wagner 23 times until she died from her numerous wounds.

Following the murder, Andrews alleged that the two returned to Safehaven. Wolfe collected Geoffrey MacIntyre, who had passed out before they left the bar, and brought him home before returning to the scene of the crime, only to find the police already there after being called by a shocked Kyle McAllister. When questioned,

MacIntyre originally stated that both Wolfe and Douglass had remained with him the entire time.

Andrews reminded the jury that Douglass did not tell even her closest friends about her true whereabouts on the night of the murder. At the same time that she protected that secret, Douglass used the Painseeker web site to make repeated demands for someone to find the true killer, even going so far as to hire a private investigator to investigate the original police investigation.

Andrews declared that Douglass' late admission that she was at the scene of the crime was "a brazen attempt to cover herself while maintaining her demands to find the 'true killer' of Raychel."

Andrews ended his statement by decrying Douglass' refusal to personally testify, choosing instead to use her "assistant" to provide her whereabouts without exposing herself to questions of drug abuse, reversed statements, and murder itself.

In the closing argument for the defense, high profile attorney Les Levin re-launched the "rush to judgment" defense that he drew together on Thursday. He stated that the only reason Douglass was being charged was due to an outcry for police to solve the crime after the Painseeker web site brought publicity to Wagner's unsolved homicide.

Levin charged that the police were substandard in their prosecution of the case, to the point of not speaking with the last person to see Wagner alive. He also stated that the forensics reports were substandard because of who the victim

was: an ex-hooker junkie with an extensive domestic violence record.

With regard to the prosecution motive, Levin reminded the jury that the affair between Kincaid and Wagner had ended nine months prior to Wagner's murder. He also reminded the jury that the police were unable to find even a single fingerprint in the apartment to confirm that Douglass had been inside the apartment. Levin also stood by the testimony of Sharon Wolfe, who remained firm in her statement that Douglass never entered the apartment.

Levin conceded that Andrews' timeline was valid; however, he disagreed with his assumption of guilt. Levin argued that the timeline only established that there was an opportunity to murder Wagner. He compared the prosecution's case to that of a connect-the-dots puzzle with numbers missing.

"Each time we get to a key point in the case, there's a number missing in their picture. No fingerprints. No murder weapon. No definitive evidence. Just supposition, and those suppositions require leaps of faith to complete the prosecution's puzzle. Each leap is a doubt. A reasonable doubt."

Following the statements, Judge Rodriguez read the jury's instructions and allowed them to begin their deliberations. There was no immediate conclusion, and deliberations are scheduled to continue on Monday.