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Jury Deliberations Continue In Painseeker Murder Trial

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LOS ANGELES -- Jury deliberations continued on Monday in the Painseeker Murder Trial in Los Angeles Superior Court. Although the jury did not reach a decision in their first full day of deliberations, they did request that portions of testimony be read to them in court.

The first-degree murder trial of Laura Douglass has garnered attention due to the role of the Internet in the prosecution of the case. Lance Wagner, the husband of the victim, Raychel Wagner, created a web site to honor his slain wife's work as a singer and poet. However, the site became an extension of the police investigation. In December of 2001, a reader's tip led to prosecutors pressing murder charges against Laura Douglass and Sharon Wolfe.

Prosecution and defense attorneys waited anxiously outside the courtroom Monday morning, each side anticipating an early decision in their favor; however, no such decision came. In the early afternoon, the jury requested to reconvene in court so that selections of the court transcripts be read in open court.

The two sections seemed to be in opposition to one another. The first excerpt was from Geoffrey MacIntyre's testimony regarding Douglass' lying about her whereabouts on the night of the murder. The second one was from Private Investigator Nick Graves testimony regarding his observations of Douglass' behavior during his re-opening of Wagner's homicide investigation.

A request to read a section of the closing argument by defense attorney Les Levin was denied by Judge Michael Rodriguez, as only testimony is allowed to be read in court. Judge Rodriguez reminded the jury that the attorney's arguments do not constitute testimony, and should not be given the same weight in deliberations.

Courtroom observers believe that the jury is strongly divided, and that the two excerpts were read to allow the opposing sides to either forward their argument or harm the other side, depending on which side requested which excerpt.

Regardless, the jury will continue deliberations on Tuesday.