

Jurors hear another Spector gun tale

by Matt Krasnowski

LOS ANGELES - Jurors in the Phil Spector murder trial heard another tale of the acclaimed producer toting a firearm, as a friend testified on Monday that he once grabbed a rifle or shotgun for "protection" and escorted her and a friend from his mansion.

Unlike four other witnesses who in earlier testimony described a menacing Spector, witness Kathy Sullivan said he made no threats and kept the gun pointed at the ground.

After Deputy District Attorney Alan Jackson reminded her of comments she made previously to investigators, Sullivan acknowledged that after she left Spector's house, she told her friend, "I'm so glad we're out of there right now." But she also recalled the scene as being comical. She said that the gun seemed larger than Spector and he was dressed plaid.

"He looked like Elmer Fudd," Sullivan said as jurors stifled laughs.

Prosecutors, who are trying to prove that Spector, 67, shot and killed actress Lana Clarkson, 40, convinced Superior Court Judge Larry Paul Fidler to allow jurors to hear Sullivan's account. The government wanted to counter the defense's portrayal of Spector as being fatherly toward Sullivan, and to show that he had ready access to firearms.

"When was the last time you heard of a father walking his daughter to the bus station with a shotgun in his hand?" Jackson told Fidler, with jurors out of the courtroom.

Sullivan, who waited tables at a favorite Spector haunt, said the incident occurred in 1997 or 1998 when she and a friend visited him at his castlelike Alhambra home. The women, who aspired to start a musical "lounge act," brought pizza and wine and Spector drank liquor, Sullivan said.

She said that Spector put them up for the night. The next morning, as they were saying goodbye in his foyer, Spector said he had to go upstairs. He returned holding either a shotgun or rifle, she said.

"What's that for?" Sullivan said she and her friend asked Spector. "He said, 'protection.'"

Sullivan was called primarily to talk about the events leading up to the Feb. 3, 2003 death of Clarkson at Spector's home in suburban Alhambra.

Jurors are expected to hear Tuesday from key prosecution witness Adriano DeSouza, who was Spector's driver on the day of Clarkson's shooting. DeSouza is expected to testify he was outside Spector's home around 5 a.m., when he heard a loud noise, and then saw Spector walk out of his house and say, "I think I killed somebody."

After Sullivan's testimony on Monday, jurors heard from a string of restaurant employees who provided details about Spector's tour of Los Angeles-area night spots in the hours before Clarkson's death.

As the court day wrapped up, jurors saw security video camera images of Spector leaving with Clarkson from the House of Blues nightclub in West Hollywood where she worked.

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