

Spector defense tries to chip away at chauffeur's credibility

by Matt Krasnowski

LOS ANGELES - The chauffeur, who prosecutors say heard Phil Spector confess to killing an actress, acknowledged in court Monday that he told police moments after the shooting that he was "not sure" what the acclaimed record producer said.

Working to undermine the credibility of witness Adriano DeSouza, defense lawyer Bradley Brunon confronted the Brazilian immigrant, whose primary language is Portuguese, with a transcript from a police interview in which an investigator asks if he can recall what Spector said.

"I think so. I think - I'm not sure. It's my English that -," the transcript quotes DeSouza as saying.

"You weren't exactly sure what was said, that was what you told them?" Brunon asked.

"Yes," DeSouza replied.

A prosecutor later tried to minimize some of DeSouza's alleged inconsistent statements, suggesting that the investigators' repetitive questioning confused DeSouza.

The testimony came during the key government witness's third day on the stand in Spector's murder trial. DeSouza was the only other person on the scene when actress Lana Clarkson was shot.

Prosecutors contend Clarkson was trying to leave Spector's home when he fired a .38 caliber revolver in her mouth. The defense has argued that Clarkson killed herself.

DeSouza drove Spector, 67, and Clarkson, 40, to the producer's suburban mansion after they met at a West Hollywood nightclub where Clarkson worked.

Despite the defense questioning Monday, DeSouza stood by his testimony that he heard a loud noise while outside Spector's mansion on Feb. 3, 2003. Moments later the driver saw the music figure emerge from his home holding a handgun and say, "I think I killed somebody." In Brunon's low-key cross-examination, the lawyer primarily centered on the five words that prosecutors call a confession.

"Do you think you might have heard, 'I think somebody was killed?'" Brunon asked.

"No," DeSouza said.

The lawyer also noted that DeSouza quoted Spector as using the word "shot" instead of "killed" in police statements. But a prosecutor later showed jurors transcripts of DeSouza's police interviews that show a police officer initially used the word "shot" and that DeSouza used the word "killed" repeatedly.

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