

Witness: Spector was 2 to 3 feet away from Clarkson during shooting

by Matt Krasnowski - CNS

LOS ANGELES - "Mist-like" bloodstains indicate that Phil Spector stood at least two to three feet from Lana Clarkson with his arms raised when the actress was fatally shot, a forensic expert testified Thursday.

Lynne Herold, a criminalist with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, displayed photographs of tiny stains on the cream-colored wool jacket Spector wore when Clarkson was shot, and said they show that the rock 'n' roll producer was standing nearby and to Clarkson's right.

"In other words, two to three feet from Ms. Clarkson's face," said Deputy District Attorney Alan Jackson.

"Yes," Herold said.

She noted there were bloodstains on the cream-colored jacket's sleeves and that "arms have to be raised" for the blood to get there.

Later, Jackson stood close to Herold while she sat in the witness chair and raised his hands to his chest with his fingers extended toward her to demonstrate how the blood could have struck the sleeves.

The defense contends the same blood evidence shows Spector wasn't standing close enough to Clarkson to have fired the fatal bullet in her mouth.

Spector, 67, is charged with second-degree murder in the Feb. 3, 2003 shooting of Clarkson, 40, at his suburban mansion. They met just hours before the shooting at the House of Blues nightclub in West Hollywood where Clarkson worked. He has pleaded not guilty and contends that Clarkson shot herself.

In opening statements defense lawyers said their experts would testify that blood could travel six feet or more when someone is shot in the mouth, noting that pressure from gases in the mouth can propel the blood.

But under cross-examination from defense lawyer Linda Kenney-Baden, Herold cast doubt on the defense contention, saying that the estimates beyond three feet are based on laboratory tests that may not reflect real-world circumstances.

"You can actually never know what those (oral) pressures are and in a sense it is totally irrelevant," Herold said. "The pressures are what they were and you have the (bloodstain) pattern that's available at the scene and it is what it is."

Earlier, under Jackson's questioning, Herold testified that the gun was in Clarkson's mouth with its muzzle behind her teeth when she was shot.

There was blood on the recessed sections of the gun, a Colt Cobra with ".38 SPECIAL" engraved on it, but little blood was found on the gun's raised surfaces, indicating that someone "moved or removed" the blood after the shooting, Herold said.

Jackson asked if someone "wiping the gun down" could have caused the changes.

"That is one possible mechanism," she said.

Her testimony will continue next week.

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