



Former assistant recounts Spector's threats

Dianne Ogden testifies that the producer put a weapon to her head and forced her to stay when she tried to leave his home after a 1989 party.

By Peter Y. Hong, Times Staff Writer
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Pressing her index finger to her cheek to mimic a gun barrel, a former assistant to Phil Spector testified Monday that the famous music producer and murder defendant threatened to shoot her in 1989.

"He put it all over me," Dianne Ogden said as she moved her finger from her right cheek to her nose to her forehead. Spector, she said, ordered her to the bedroom of his home, then in Pasadena, because, Ogden said, "he wanted to rape me."

Spector, who has worked with the Beatles, Ike and Tina Turner and the Righteous Brothers, is charged with murdering actress Lana Clarkson, who was shot in the mouth at his Alhambra mansion Feb. 3, 2003. He has pleaded not guilty and is free on \$1-million bail.

On cross-examination, defense attorney Bruce Cutler angrily accused Ogden of adding details she had not told investigators, and of shaping her account after talking to police. "You formed an opinion!" he shouted.

Cutler's outbursts prompted a reprimand from Judge Larry Paul Fidler. "You will not point and yell at witnesses in my courtroom — ever!" Fidler said, glaring at Cutler.

An instant after he agreed to that, Cutler again shouted "you formed an opinion" at Ogden and pounded his fist on the table. Fidler told jurors to disregard Cutler's outburst. Moments later, Cutler's voice again rattled the courtroom, prompting prosecutor Patrick Dixon to spring to his feet. "Your honor, ask him to stop," Dixon said heatedly, pointing toward Cutler.

Fidler later told both men to stop shouting. "My hearing's OK. Other things are failing, but not that," he said.

Testimony will resume Wednesday because of a juror's scheduling conflict today. Fidler will hear motions from lawyers without the jury present.

Ogden, who said she had been a friend and part-time assistant to Spector, is the second woman to testify that the producer had threatened her with a gun when she tried to leave his home.

Prosecutors are expected to call at least two other women to testify that they also were held at gunpoint when they rejected Spector's advances, bolstering the district attorney's theory that he followed a pattern of luring women to his home, drinking, then pulling guns on them when they tried to leave — the blueprint, they say, for Clarkson's death.

Spector's attorneys contend Clarkson shot herself after meeting Spector that night at the House of Blues in West Hollywood, where she worked as a hostess in the club's VIP room.

Ogden said she was at Spector's Pasadena house in March 1989 for a party with a few others and was preparing to leave about midnight. She described putting her handbag over her shoulder and heading for the door when she said Spector approached her with a rifle.

Clarkson was found dead with her bag over the shoulder, which prosecutors say indicates she was trying to leave Spector's home.

Seemingly on the verge of tears, Ogden stopped her narrative to declare: "I want to make it clear I was subpoenaed to come here."

She explained that she had always cared for Spector. "I wanted to protect him," she said.

Ogden never contacted police about Spector's threats and spoke up only when district attorney's investigators appeared at her Park City, Utah, home in 2004, she testified.

Ogden smiled and spoke affectionately of Spector, testifying that she admired his generosity on occasions, including his gift to a cash-strapped Ike Turner to get his clothes from the cleaners.

But the charming man whose friendship she enjoyed turned vicious when he was drunk, Ogden said. She said she followed his orders to spend the night in his Pasadena home because "he said he was going to blow my brains out." Asked if they had sexual relations, Ogden responded, "He tried."

Ogden said she continued to see Spector because she felt he "needed help" and that his outbursts were out of character. A few months after she was forced to spend the night, Ogden said Spector chased her with an Uzi submachine gun as she drove away from his house.

Ogden's account of being chased down Spector's driveway echoed earlier testimony from Dorothy Melvin, a former girlfriend, who said that Spector followed her with a shotgun as she drove from his house in 1993.

Also Monday, prosecutors played profanity-laced messages they said Spector had left on Melvin's answering machine after the shotgun incident. On one recording, Spector said, "Be very careful what you say to me because nothing you say is worth your life."

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