



Spector jury gets laugh over gun incident

Woman leaving the diminutive record producer's home says he looked like Elmer Fudd as he came down his stairs toting a big gun.

By Peter Y. Hong, Times Staff Writer

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A fifth woman testified Monday in the Phil Spector murder trial that the famous record producer brought out a gun as she was leaving his house several years ago.

But this time the jury laughed as Kathy Sullivan described Spector looking like Bugs Bunny nemesis Elmer Fudd as he came down the stairs of his Alhambra mansion holding a rifle or shotgun "for protection."

Spector's attorneys, who had opposed allowing her to testify about the gun incident, said her story ended up helping them by showing Spector, 67, as more of an eccentric than the menacing drunk other witnesses to his history of gunplay have portrayed.

Sullivan said she thought the diminutive music producer looked silly toting a big gun as she and a friend stood in the foyer of his home — the same place where actress Lana Clarkson, 40, was found shot to death Feb. 3, 2003.

"You just had to be there," Sullivan told lawyers and Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Larry Paul Fidler. "I think he was wearing a plaid jacket. I remember thinking he looked like Elmer Fudd. The gun was bigger than he was. It was surreal. It was silly."

Spector, who produced music with the Beatles, the Righteous Brothers and Ike and Tina Turner, is charged with murdering Clarkson hours after meeting her at the House of Blues, where she worked as a hostess. He has pleaded not guilty and is free on \$1-million bail.

Sullivan first told her story without the jury present. Over the defense's opposition, Fidler allowed her to repeat the testimony before the jury.

A waitress at one of Spector's favorite haunts, Sullivan said she had socialized with him for years before the night of Clarkson's shooting, when he appeared at her restaurant, the Grill on the Alley.

Sullivan agreed to join Spector for drinks later that night at the House of Blues, where he met Clarkson. Sullivan returned home alone, while Clarkson accompanied Spector to his Alhambra home.

Sullivan said she and a female friend had made a purely platonic visit to Spector's house in 1997 or 1998; the three adults slept in separate bedrooms. When the women were ready to leave in the morning, Sullivan said, Spector asked them to wait while he went upstairs.

A few minutes later, he came down the stairs with either a rifle or shotgun, she said. Unlike four previous women who had said in court that a drunken Spector threatened to shoot them when they spurned his advances, Sullivan said he told them the gun was "for protection" and kept it pointed at the ground.

When she repeated her story for the jury, Sullivan left out her description of Spector as Fudd, the Looney Tunes character defined by his futile stalking of Bugs Bunny with a double-barreled shotgun.

Defense attorney Roger Rosen pointedly coaxed her. "Did he look like some cartoon character?" Rosen asked. Sullivan answered, "He looked like Elmer Fudd," drawing smiles and quiet giggles from the jury box.

Outside the courtroom, Rosen said of Sullivan's testimony, "The way it came in, we're pleased with it."

He said Sullivan's account showed that Spector, at least on that one occasion, had not drawn a gun to threaten someone. Rosen said Spector once was badly beaten in a hotel, which is why he uses bodyguards and might explain his long history with guns.

District attorney's spokeswoman Sandi Gibbons said "it is up to the jury" to decide what to make of Sullivan's testimony.

"Our job is to get to the truth" through witnesses like Sullivan, she said.

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