



Spector's driver reaffirms his key testimony

On cross-examination, he repeats that the music producer said, 'I think I killed somebody.'

By Peter Y. Hong, Times Staff Writer
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Phil Spector's driver wrapped up four days of testimony Tuesday by firmly holding to his account that he saw Spector emerge from his Alhambra mansion moments after actress Lana Clarkson was shot, a gun in his bloody hand, and heard the music producer tell him, "I think I killed somebody."

Adriano DeSouza, a former valet parking attendant who worked as an occasional driver for Spector, was a key witness in the murder trial of the legendary producer of records for the Beatles, Righteous Brothers and Ike and Tina Turner. Spector has pleaded not guilty to murdering Clarkson, who was shot to death in his home Feb. 3, 2003; he is free on \$1-million bail.

Prosecutors called Spector's alleged statement to DeSouza a murder confession.

The defense team has attacked DeSouza as an illegal immigrant beholden to prosecutors who helped keep him in the country. Spector's attorneys also questioned DeSouza's English skills to suggest that he misunderstood Spector.

Bradley Brunon, one of Spector's six lawyers, asked DeSouza under cross-examination if Spector had actually said, "I think somebody's been killed."

To address the defense allegations, prosecutors played a video recording of DeSouza's interview with sheriff's homicide detectives about five hours after Clarkson's shooting.

In it, a detective asked DeSouza what he heard Spector say. "I think I killed somebody," DeSouza answered. "You clearly heard what he said?" the detective asked.

"Yes," DeSouza replied.

After the playing of the recording in the courtroom, Brunon asked DeSouza if he believed his immigration lawyer was "attempting to use your role in this case as the basis for keeping you in the country."

DeSouza answered: "No."

Brunon also questioned whether DeSouza was guided by detectives, who said in the recorded interview "you saw what you did see, you heard what you heard, what that is, is not going to change."

Brunon asked if DeSouza thought those words were an instruction not to change his story. DeSouza, said, "Yeah, he's suggesting, if I go to the court, to tell what I saw, what I heard. I understood that."

To clarify DeSouza's understanding, prosecutor Alan Jackson later asked, "Did you understand all you were to do was to tell the truth?"

"Yes," DeSouza answered.

Jackson again asked about Spector's alleged statement. "Are you mistaken about what you heard?"

"No," DeSouza said.

"Are you sure?" Jackson continued.

"Yes," DeSouza replied. Then he was excused.

The court has scheduled a hearing today outside the presence of the jury on whether the defense withheld from prosecutors a piece of evidence, possibly a fingernail. In the afternoon, fire, police and coroner's officials are set to testify.

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TRIAL NOTES: Also Tuesday, Judge Larry Paul Fidler cleared a juror of any wrongdoing for responding to inquiries from a writer for the Los Angeles Times. Jurors were told not to discuss the case with anybody.

Lawyers for the newspaper reported the contact, made by a freelancer for the Calendar section. Fidler examined e-mail traffic between the juror and the reporter in reaching his decision.

"No improprieties took place on the part of the juror," the judge said. But he termed the actions of the reporter "questionable to say the least."