



Entertainment

Defence rests in Spector trial



Mar 13 2009 10:00 AM

Los Angeles - Phil Spector's defence attorney rested his case on Thursday in the music producer's murder retrial involving the death of actor Lana Clarkson.

Superior Court Judge Larry Paul Fidler advised Spector of his right to testify, but he chose not to take the stand in his own defence.

Attorney Doron Weinberg concluded with testimony from forensic psychologist Elizabeth Loftus, an expert in memory and eyewitness testimony.

Her opinions were presented to cast doubt on the prosecution's star witness, a chauffeur who said he heard Spector say he thought he had killed somebody.

Spector, the eccentric music legend renowned for his "Wall of Sound" recording technique and for producing a string of 1960s hits, is charged with second-degree murder in the death of Clarkson, who became a 1980s cult figure through her starring role in the movie *Barbarian Queen*.

Memory does not work like a videotape recorder

Loftus, a professor at the University of California, Irvine, and author of 22 books on human memory, eyewitness testimony and repressed memory, told jurors that eyewitness observations can be influenced by lighting and the extent of time you have to look at something.

She said the stress of the moment also plays a role. As for hearing statements, she said accuracy depends on whether distractions divert the person's attention.

"Memory does not work like a videotape recorder," she said, noting that individuals sometimes change their descriptions inadvertently because of post-event information they receive.

On cross-examination, prosecutor Alan Jackson suggested that Loftus is "to a certain degree, a professional defence witness". She acknowledged she has rarely been asked to testify by prosecutors and "I have to wait for people to call me."

She acknowledged under his questioning that eyewitnesses who are confident of their accounts "are slightly more likely to be right than those who aren't".

The chauffeur expressed confidence in his observations when he testified.

"You are not rendering an opinion on the accuracy or truthfulness of a witness in this case, is that correct?" asked Jackson.

Gunshot

"Correct," said Loftus.

After the defence rested, prosecutors began their rebuttal case and the judge told jurors that testimony in the trial would conclude sometime next week to be followed by closing arguments.

Clarkson died of a gunshot fired into her mouth while seated in the foyer of Spector's home in 2003.

The defence has contended she was suicidal and killed herself. The prosecution maintains that Spector killed her.

In Spector's first trial the jury deadlocked 10-2 with the majority favouring conviction. The second trial began in October.

The retrial recessed until Monday.

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