Witness: Ron Grantski

Date: 2004-11-30

Proceedings held November 30, 2004

Called by: People (prosecution)

Phase: Penalty

Examinations: Direct – David Harris

Day 1 of 1 for this witness

Court: San Mateo County Superior Court, Redwood City (People v. Scott Peterson)

Source: https://pwc-sii.com/CourtDocs/Transcripts/Grantski-penalty.htm

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Direct Examination by David Harris

HARRIS: Mr. Grantski, you're the stepfather of Laci Peterson?

GRANTSKI: I have always considered myself that. She was two years old when Sharon and I got together.

HARRIS: When Laci came into the house at age two did she kind of grow up with you from that point forward?

GRANTSKI: That's, yes. She definitely grew up.

HARRIS: Can you tell us about Laci.

GRANTSKI: I first met Laci, I went to pick Sharon up for a date at her house. She was about a foot-and-a-half tall, came running to the door and answered the door. That was my first meeting with Laci. She never stopped running and she always had something to say. I used to have a nickname, I called her JJ for Jabber Jaws. I at times regret calling her that, but I always wondered if that hurt her feelings.

HARRIS: As Laci got older, as she walked into a room did you notice?

GRANTSKI: You'd have to be definitely blind if you didn't. She was, she lit up any room and she was always the center of attention. And even when you wanted to take a nap or a break, so you better get all that out of the way early. She was the love of many peoples' lives and will be missed.

HARRIS: You talked about Laci when you first met her coming up and introducing herself to you, did she have a smile there?

GRANTSKI: Always, always had a smile. I guess in my life, I grew up in big cities and I was always taught to be on my guard and watch out, and Laci, she was never on her guard and she never watched out. She went ahead and without thinking.

HARRIS: As she got bigger did she keep that smile?

GRANTSKI: Always. Every time I'd tell her to be careful she'd just smile at me and go on. She was very, very smart. When I went to school it was always hard for me. She went to school, she never studied as far as I could see, and always got straight A's. That used to bother me. I had to realize that she was definitely smarter than me. I miss not being able to tell her but, and I miss the grandson that we were supposed to have.

HARRIS: Now, you're talking about Conner and I want to ask you about that. When you found out that Laci was pregnant and found out that she was going to have baby Conner, did you start making plans?

GRANTSKI: I've made plans for all the boys. The ladies might not agree with me, but I was glad there was three boys. I was going to have a chance to teach them about fishing, teach them about the stars, the ducks, everything outside. Really about fishing, what fishing is really about. And I, and that was taken away from me.

HARRIS: I'd like to have marked a couple photographs, two photographs.

JUDGE: 304. How many, how many have you got?

HARRIS: Just two photographs.

JUDGE: 304 A and B

HARRIS: Mr. Grantski, if you can look at these two photographs, 304 A and B, see if you recognize them.

GRANTSKI: Yes.

HARRIS: These photographs accurately depict Laci?

GRANTSKI: Yes, they do.

HARRIS: We'll start in reverse order and put them up on the screen.

Starting with 304 B, is that Laci with Sharon?

GRANTSKI: Yes, it is.

HARRIS: It's kind of hard to see in that particular photograph, but is that you in the background there?

GRANTSKI: I think so. It's probably one of the better pictures I've taken.

HARRIS: What we see there is, do we see Laci with that big smile you're talking about?

GRANTSKI: If you look at her and her mother, they have that smile.

That's one of the things that attracted me to Sharon was the great big beautiful smile, and her daughter has it too.

HARRIS: We'll put up 304What do we see in this photograph?

GRANTSKI: Some big fat guy with Laci. Laci bought me that T-shirt.

That was my Christmas present from Laci. I still have it.

HARRIS: And, again, we see Laci with that big smile?

GRANTSKI: Always. She was always with the smile. She was never afraid to voice an opinion about something she liked or didn't like, which I admire in a woman.

HARRIS: Now this particular picture here, is that around Christmas time?

GRANTSKI: Yes, it was. That was at our house.

HARRIS: Was Laci kind of fun to have around during the holidays?

GRANTSKI: In those days she couldn't wait for Christmas. That was she would start about the 22nd grabbing packages and feeling which ones and putting them in order how she was going to open them, decide whether she had the right ones or enough or whatever from the time she was little, all the way.

Yeah, she was great at Christmas.

HARRIS: When you get called at Christmas Eve of 2002 and you find out that Laci is missing, how did you feel?

GRANTSKI: Well, I didn't believe it. I, Sharon tells me and I said, Huh? She's probably, always over a friend's house and just doesn't call.

But it didn't take long to see the panic in Sharon's voice to realize and I called the police and we started right in. It's just been a nightmare ever since. It's still not over.

HARRIS: What is life like without Laci and Conner?

GRANTSKI: Well, I don't know how it would with Conner. I never was given the opportunity. I know what it is without Laci. Unfortunately, a lot of it you don't realize because you're used to having them there and you don't realize a lot of things until they're gone. And I can't explain it right, but when you have somebody that you watch grow up for so long and things that you wished you had said differently or wished you would have said, and now you don't. You can't. It's hard. Nobody should have to go through this. I wished I could be the one gone and not her. I have a son, Darren, Laci was about 12 and I think my son was 17, so when Brent wasn't around and Darren lived with Sharon and I for a few years it was kind of like her big brother.

And he lives in Oregon and I, he's having a real hard time. We're all having a hard time: Family, friends, even new friends. We've had hugs and loves from places we didn't know existed. And there, there's some people that are, I need to get up and hug my son. He needs it.

HARRIS: How does, how does this affect you when the holidays come around?

GRANTSKI: From December 24th to May 4th, there isn't a holiday in there that we can think about handling. From birthdays, my mom, my sister's, Brent, Laci, my son, the whole family's birthdays. Laci was murdered on Christmas Eve, the bodies were found at Easter, so we don't have the same meaning. They'll never be the same. At least, I can't see them being the same.

HARRIS: You made a statement when you were asked about how this has affected you and you said something about your heart being smaller, what did you mean?

JUDGE: I can hardly hear you.

GRANTSKI: I, a lot of it's been ripped away. I don't know if it will ever be the same again. I, it's awful hard to talk in front of a bunch of people. My feelings are very personal. You didn't realize at the time they were personal and I'll never be able to fix some things. I don't know if any of us will be able to be the same again. And a part of our hearts are gone, and definitely a part of mine is gone.

HARRIS: I have no other questions.