Witness: Sandra Jagoda

Date: 2004-07-21

Proceedings held July 21, 2004

Called by: People (prosecution)

Phase: Guilt

Examinations: Direct – David Harris; Cross – Mark Geragos

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/Jagoda.htm

Page/line: not available (source HTML has no page or line markers)

Text below is verbatim from the source page for this date only.

Direct Examination by David Harris

HARRIS: Ms. Jagoda, where do you work?

JAGODA: I work in the Contra Costa County Coroner's Office.

HARRIS: I want to direct your attention back to April 14th of 2003. Were you working at the Coroner's Office back then?

JAGODA: Yes.

HARRIS: On that particular day did you assist Dr. Peterson in an autopsy?

JAGODA: Yes.

HARRIS: And as part of the, are you like a pathologist's assistant there?

JAGODA: That's correct.

HARRIS: And as part of your assignment as the assistant, did the doctor provide you with some samples to send off for DNA comparison?

JAGODA: Yes.

HARRIS: Did you take those samples and place them into any type of containers?

JAGODA: Yes, I did.

HARRIS: I want to show you a series of photographs that have previously been marked 105 A through G. Do you recognize these particular items? If you look at the pictures.

JAGODA: Yes, I do.

< <recess>

HARRIS: Ms. Jagoda, right before we broke I had you look at some photographs and you indicated that you recognized those items. I'll go ahead and project these up on the screen. Starting with 105 A, do you recognize this photograph of being the containers that you obtained that day from Dr. Peterson?

JAGODA: Yes.

HARRIS: Showing you specifically 105 B.

JAGODA: Yes.

HARRIS: And does this particular item have the case number for a Baby Doe?

JAGODA: That's the correct number.

HARRIS: That's the correct number. And that's 03-0799?

JAGODA: Yes.

HARRIS: And do you recognize the writing at the bottom of that label?

JAGODA: That's my writing.

HARRIS: Looking at the next photograph, 105 C,

JAGODA: Yes.

HARRIS: this is an additional sample from that baby?

JAGODA: Yes.

HARRIS: And, again, do you recognize your writing at the bottom of that?

JAGODA: Yes.

HARRIS: With the same case number?

JAGODA: Yes.

HARRIS: 105 D, does this appear to be the container that a sample was placed in by you on that particular date?

JAGODA: Yes, it does.

HARRIS: Showing you a close-up of that, 105 E, do you recognize the writing on the bottom of the label?

JAGODA: That's my writing.

HARRIS: And that was for a Jane Doe with the case number of 03-0808?

JAGODA: That's correct.

HARRIS: 105 E, do you recognize that as well?

JAGODA: Yes.

HARRIS: And on the label from the Contra Costa Coroner, County Coroner, do you recognize the handwriting on there?

JAGODA: Yes, that's my writing.

HARRIS: And this is the bone that was provided to the laboratory for DNA examination?

JAGODA: Yes.

HARRIS: Do these particular items, after they were placed in these containers, did you give them to Deputy Leo Martin from the Coroner's Office?

JAGODA: Yes, I did.

HARRIS: The People have no other questions.

Cross Examination by Mark Geragos

GERAGOS: Ms. Jagoda, were you Dr. Brian Peterson's assistant?

JAGODA: Yes, I am.

GERAGOS: You were present for the autopsy in this case?

JAGODA: Yes, I was.

GERAGOS: The, and that was the autopsy of the baby that was recovered on April the 13th?

JAGODA: That's one of the cases, uh-huh.

GERAGOS: And then you were present also for the autopsy on April 14th?

JAGODA: The autopsies were both on the same day.

GERAGOS: What time was that?

JAGODA: 0808 and 0799.

REPORTER: I'm sorry, can you repeat your answer.

JAGODA: The autopsies were both on the same day, the case 0799 and 0808.

GERAGOS: Okay. What time was the first one?

JAGODA: I recollect it was in the morning, but I don't remember the exact time.

GERAGOS: Okay. And the second one was that same day in the afternoon?

JAGODA: It was more toward the evening.

GERAGOS: Okay. The, who else was present during the autopsy of the baby?

JAGODA: I believe it was Jeff Soler from Richmond Police Department and Dr. Peterson.

GERAGOS: Jeff Soler is the gentleman who works for which police department?

JAGODA: Richmond.

GERAGOS: Okay. And was he the person who had responded to the scene, as you understood it, when he brought the baby over to the Coroner's Office?

JAGODA: I don't have that information.

GERAGOS: Did you prepare any kind of a report in connection with this?

JAGODA: No.

GERAGOS: Okay. As an assistant, you were an assistant on many autopsies with Dr. Peterson before?

JAGODA: Yes.

GERAGOS: And how long have you worked there?

JAGODA: Approximately six years.

GERAGOS: The, what do you do as the assistant during the autopsy?

JAGODA: I am kind of like a second pair of hands during the autopsy. I help the doctor with what he needs help with. He asks for my assistance and whatever he needs then I do.

GERAGOS: Now when the baby was brought in did you, how do you document the condition of the baby for the, prior to conducting the autopsy?

JAGODA: I don't document anything, that's up to the doctor and the deputies.

GERAGOS: Okay. Do you, is there generally some kind of a towel or a blanket that's placed down on the autopsy table so that you can take some pictures or somebody can take some pictures?

JAGODA: Not necessarily, no.

GERAGOS: Well, if there's any evidence that's on the body, for instance, when you're doing an autopsy is it your practice to throw that evidence away?

JAGODA: Never.

GERAGOS: Okay. And why is that, I mean, are you instructed to do something with any evidence that's on the body?

JAGODA: The evidence that's on the body is removed before the autopsy begins.

GERAGOS: Okay. And is that placed somewhere?

JAGODA: That's collected from the criminalist.

GERAGOS: That's done by who?

JAGODA: The criminalist from whatever department is responding.

GERAGOS: Okay. In this case would that be Mr. Soler, Soler?

JAGODA: Are you talking about the baby?

GERAGOS: I'm talking about specifically the baby.

JAGODA: That would have been Jeff Soler from Richmond P.D.

GERAGOS: Okay. And as far as you know, besides Mr. Soler, there was nobody else, besides Mr. Soler, Dr. Peterson and yourself, those were the only three?

JAGODA: That's what I recall, yes.

GERAGOS: Okay. And the autopsy was sometime at around 8:00 in the morning?

JAGODA: Probably. Dr. Peterson starts usually between 7:30 and 8:00.

GERAGOS: I'm going to show you what's been marked as double X. Does this look like the condition of the baby when it was brought in prior to the autopsy being performed?

JAGODA: Yes.

GERAGOS: Okay. Is that an accurate representation of how the baby looked when it was on top of what appears to be either a towel or a blanket?

JAGODA: Yes.

GERAGOS: Do you see a little bit of kind of a shining little metal object there, is that the table itself?

JAGODA: That looks like the table.

GERAGOS: And the table, the autopsy table?

JAGODA: The autopsy table.

GERAGOS: Okay. And then is that in the, that's specifically in the Coroner's Office, obviously?

JAGODA: Yes.

GERAGOS: Okay. The, who would remove, or in this case, who did remove the items that are on the body of the baby?

JAGODA: Dr. Peterson or Jeff Soler.

GERAGOS: Okay. And Jeff Soler would be the gentleman you mentioned from Richmond P.D.?

JAGODA: Yes.

GERAGOS: Now, was there also a supervising criminalist by the name of P., first name, last name Holes, H-o-l-e-s?

JAGODA: I don't think he was there for the baby's autopsy.

GERAGOS: Okay. The time of the autopsy was the, the tape that I showed you that was around the baby's neck that you saw; is that correct?

JAGODA: I need to look again.

GERAGOS: Sure.

JAGODA: Yes.

GERAGOS: How did that get removed?

JAGODA: I'm not sure. It would have either been Dr. Peterson or Jeff Soler that removes all the evidence.

GERAGOS: How about this item right here that's along the baby's ear, do you remember who removed that?

JAGODA: No, I don't remember.

GERAGOS: Do you remember what it was?

JAGODA: No, I don't.

GERAGOS: As you look at it right now can you tell what it is?

JAGODA: No, I cannot.

GERAGOS: Was there an estimate or a determination at that autopsy made of the baby's age?

JAGODA: I don't recall hearing one.

GERAGOS: Let me show you 20046, which is a Richmond Police Department report. You can read that silently to yourself. It's a report by Mr. Soler. Does that refresh your recollection as to whether or not Dr. Peterson estimated the age of the baby?

JAGODA: I don't recall Dr. Peterson saying that within my hearing. I'm not right there always present when Dr. Peterson and Jeff Soler are speaking.

GERAGOS: Excuse me?

JAGODA: I'm not always present when Jeff Soler and Dr. Peterson are speaking at the table side.

GERAGOS: May I have just one moment, Your Honor?

JUDGE: Sure. Jeff Soler is a criminalist from the Richmond Police Department?

JAGODA: Yes.

GERAGOS: Is he a criminalist or is actually a sworn officer?

JAGODA: I'm sorry, I really don't know his title. Maybe he's not a criminalist. He's an officer from Richmond Police Department. I'm not sure what his capacity is, but he's there on all autopsies.

JUDGE: Does he collect evidence during the autopsy?

JAGODA: Yes.

GERAGOS: Thank you. I have no further questions.

JUDGE: May this witness be excused?

HARRIS: No objection.

JUDGE: Ms. Jagoda, thank you. Thank you for waiting around. Appreciate it.