Witness: Richard House

Date: 2004-07-21

Proceedings held July 21, 2004

Called by: People (prosecution)

Phase: Guilt

Examinations: Cross – Mark Geragos (continued from previous day); Redirect – David Harris; Recross – Mark Geragos

Day 2 of 2 for this witness

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

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July 21, 2004

GERAGOS: Detective, good morning.

HOUSE: Good morning.

GERAGOS: The, yesterday we, I guess on direct Mr. Harris was asking you about going to a Mail Boxes location?

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: Mail Boxes Etc.

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: Marked an exhibit, I think it was People's Exhibit 149; is that correct?

HOUSE: I take your word for it.

GERAGOS: Okay. Can you tell me,

JUDGE: Yes, it is 149.

GERAGOS: who was the application for?

HOUSE: TradeCorp.

GERAGOS: Who is TradeCorp?

HOUSE: That's the company that Scott Peterson works for, I believe.

GERAGOS: Okay. Did it appear to you, at least when you went there, that the mailbox was taken in the name of TradeCorp?

HOUSE: The name of TradeCorp and Scott Peterson.

GERAGOS: Right. Scott Peterson is the representative, of the applicant. The name of the, name in which applicant's mail will be received was TradeCorp, correct?

HOUSE: Correct.

GERAGOS: Then the name in which applicant's mail would be received is Scott Peterson, correct?

HOUSE: Correct.

GERAGOS: Okay. And the, there was a service agreement; is that correct?

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: Okay. And the service agreement was for Scott Peterson, customer name, and then company was TradeCorp?

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: And then they were, he was assigned or TradeCorp was assigned a mailbox number?

HOUSE: Correct.

GERAGOS: Were you aware that, or did you do any investigation with TradeCorp? Specifically go out and talk to anybody at TradeCorp?

HOUSE: No, I did not.

GERAGOS: Did, did anybody or are you aware of anybody else going out and doing any investigation with TradeCorp to see if they made a request that he get a box?

HOUSE: I don't know that.

GERAGOS: Are you aware of any police reports or any investigation done as to whether there was a problem at the Emerald Avenue address?

HOUSE: No, I do not know.

GERAGOS: Did you ever talk to Detective Grogan about whether he was aware that there were thefts out of the mailbox on the Emerald Avenue address?

HOUSE: No, I did not.

GERAGOS: Were you aware that there was a theft of TradeCorp checks out of that Emerald Avenue mailbox and that's why there was a mailbox that was rented,

HARRIS: Objection.

GERAGOS: in TradeCorp's name? Were you aware of that?

HARRIS: Assumes facts not in evidence.

JUDGE: Sustained.

GERAGOS: The, as far as you know, did anybody do any investigation into why there was a mailbox taken out on December 23rd?

HOUSE: No. I do not know.

GERAGOS: Okay. And I assume that the reason that you were, that this was marked, this Amber Frey letter, to Scott Peterson was to suggest that this,

HARRIS: Objection.

GERAGOS: mailbox was,

HARRIS: Argumentative.

GERAGOS: I didn't finish it. You think it's heading in that direction?

JUDGE: Yes. Sustained.

GERAGOS: Okay.

GERAGOS: The, the, is there some reason to believe that, if you're going to be responsible for the disappearance of your wife on December 23rd, that you rent a mailbox for your girlfriend?

HARRIS: Objection. Argumentative.

JUDGE: Sustained. Sustained. Argumentative.

GERAGOS: Okay. Your wife, if you know your wife's going to disappear, why would you need to rent a mailbox?

HARRIS: Objection. Argumentative.

JUDGE: Sustained.

GERAGOS: All right. The mailbox place is located on H Street?

HOUSE: That's correct.

GERAGOS: And where is H Street in Modesto and, from the Emerald Avenue location?

HOUSE: The Emerald Avenue location is in west Modesto. H Street is downtown Modesto.

GERAGOS: Okay. And where is the Covena address?

HOUSE: That's in east, southeast Modesto.

GERAGOS: Okay. Is, how far would you say the Covena address is from the Mail Boxes Etc.? A mile?

HOUSE: Two miles, maybe.

GERAGOS: Two miles?

HOUSE: Maybe two miles.

GERAGOS: Okay. Were you aware or have any information that as of December 23rd the TradeCorp also was planning on moving the warehouse?

HOUSE: No.

GERAGOS: Is it fair to say that your only involvement in regards to this was to just go to Mail Boxes Etc. and get the application?

HOUSE: And follow-up on additional mail received at that location.

GERAGOS: Okay. Did you receive additional mail?

HOUSE: There was additional mail delivered to the mailbox, yes.

GERAGOS: Okay. How many pieces of additional mail were delivered to the mailbox, that you were, that you were notified about?

HOUSE: Several.

GERAGOS: Okay. Do you have those with you?

HOUSE: No, I do not.

GERAGOS: The DA ask you to bring those?

HOUSE: No.

GERAGOS: They just said bring the one piece of Amber Frey mail? Or the copy of the one piece of the Amber Frey mail?

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: Okay. Were the other pieces of mail addressed to TradeCorp?

HOUSE: Some.

GERAGOS: Okay. How many pieces, do you know?

HOUSE: I don't know.

GERAGOS: Were you, where is that mail, by the way?

HOUSE: It's in evidence.

GERAGOS: Okay. So where is "evidence"?

HOUSE: Well, for this case, I believe it's here.

GERAGOS: And that's the DA's office has control over the evidence, correct?

HOUSE: Correct.

HARRIS: Objection. Relevancy. Speculation.

JUDGE: Overruled. Go ahead.

GERAGOS: The, you were only asked to bring the one piece of mail, which was the Amber Frey copy of the outside letter, correct?

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: All right. You weren't asked to bring any of the TradeCorp mail that was received at that box?

HOUSE: No.

GERAGOS: Okay. Now, the, were you, so I understand correctly, did that, you did the mailbox, you did the search of the Woodland storage, correct?

HOUSE: Correct.

GERAGOS: Okay. And did you go back to the, or were you at the house on 2/18?

HOUSE: Yes, I was.

GERAGOS: Okay. Now, when you were at the house on 2/18, February 18, what location in the house were you in?

HOUSE: My assignment was to the master bedroom.

GERAGOS: Okay. And we established yesterday that the master bedroom, did you, were you with somebody in that master bedroom?

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: Who was that?

HOUSE: Detective Dodge Hendee.

GERAGOS: Okay. And as you and Dodge Hendee went through that, that room, what did you seize?

HOUSE: Everything that's listed in Detective Hendee's report. He recorded the items that were seized.

GERAGOS: Do you have that report with you?

HOUSE: I believe so.

GERAGOS: Okay. Could you refer to it and tell me the Bates numbered stamp page.

HOUSE: 2241.

GERAGOS: Okay. 2241?

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: Okay. And on, when you went there with Dodge Hendee, who was your, the person who was in charge, scene manager?

HOUSE: Detective Rudy Skultety.

GERAGOS: Okay. Now, you did a close examination of the walls, the doors, the ceiling, the floors, closets and bed, correct?

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: Okay. And all of the clothes that were in the dresser drawers, the armoire, and the bedroom closet?

HOUSE: That's correct.

GERAGOS: This take approximately, what time did you arrive there? It was a Tuesday; is that right?

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: And what time did you arrive there?

HOUSE: It was about 8:45 in the morning, I think, when I got there.

GERAGOS: Okay. And then you recorded various items that were taken; is that correct? You did some kind of, either you or Hendee wrote down what you took?

HOUSE: Detective Hendee did.

GERAGOS: Okay. And the way that you would identify the things, or the evidence items, would, because the date was February 18th, you would put a two one eight in front of the evidence item and then a dash and the number?

HOUSE: Correct.

GERAGOS: Okay. When you were there, on top of the dresser you collected some TradeCorp documents; is that correct?

HOUSE: I believe so.

GERAGOS: And there was also some credit cards that were collected?

HOUSE: I believe so.

GERAGOS: Okay. And, in addition to that, the clothing that we talked about yesterday; is that correct?

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: In addition to that, did you collect some, a series of clothes or a, clothing items?

HOUSE: There was some clothing collected, yes.

GERAGOS: Okay. Then at some point, and I'm looking at 2241 A, the left-side middle dresser drawer. Can you tell me what you collected from there? The first item which was,

HOUSE: A black pair of shorts.

GERAGOS: Okay. Was this black, black cut-off sweat shorts?

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: And was there a quantity of short three-quarter inch white or grayish-colored cat hairs on them?

HOUSE: Yes, there was.

GERAGOS: Okay. And did you take a sampling of those hairs?

HOUSE: I did not, no.

GERAGOS: Okay. Did somebody?

HOUSE: I don't know.

GERAGOS: Okay. Take a look at the middle of the paragraph on 2241, Dodge Hendee's report, and read the fourth line down under left-side middle dresser drawer, and see if that refreshes

your recollection.

HOUSE: Detective Hendee must have.

GERAGOS: Okay. Is there also a pair of black women's stretch pants?

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: Okay. Now, the, did you also collect, from a clothes hamper, a white towel?

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: Did that appear to have three small brown-ish colored stains on it that you thought or Hendee thought could possibly be blood?

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: Did you test that?

HOUSE: I did not, no.

GERAGOS: Came back negative, or somebody did and it came back negative, didn't it?

HOUSE: I don't know.

GERAGOS: Okay. And somebody went out, was it with you, and Hendee, and checked in the kitchen and documented everything that was under the sink?

HOUSE: Detective Hendee did that.

GERAGOS: And did they also record all of the alcohol bottles in the house?

HARRIS: Objection. Relevance and foundation. This witness didn't do it.

GERAGOS: I'm asking if you were there when it was done?

JUDGE: Okay. That's different. Were you there when they checked,

HOUSE: I was in the house. I was not in the kitchen.

GERAGOS: Okay. The area where the alcohol bottles were, somebody went through and recorded all alcohol bottles and checked them; is that correct?

HARRIS: Objection. Foundation.

JUDGE: If he knows. Were you there when this was done? Or do you know whether or not it was done?

HOUSE: I believe I saw Detective Hendee do that. Doing that. I didn't stand and watch him do it.

GERAGOS: Okay. I have no further questions.

Redirect Examination by David Harris

HARRIS: Detective, let me go back to the Mail Boxes Etc., show you that document again. That would be People's number 149. Turning to the second page of this. Now, looking at the second page of that Mail Boxes Etc. application, did that also bear the defendant's name?

HOUSE: Yes, it does.

HARRIS: And what does it bear as the address there?

HOUSE: 523 Covena Avenue.

HARRIS: Is the 523 address, was that a TradeCorp address?

HOUSE: I don't believe so.

HARRIS: And that wasn't the address of the shop, was it?

HOUSE: No, it was not.

HARRIS: Now, you were asked about all this other mail that was there. What was the, when you were contacted to go back and look at mail, what was the first item that was in that box?

HOUSE: The item from Amber Frey.

HARRIS: So the very first item that arrived would be this, whatever it was, a letter or card, the envelope from Miss Frey to the defendant?

HOUSE: Yes.

HARRIS: Does that indicate anything on that letter, or the envelope, TradeCorp?

HOUSE: No.

HARRIS: Now, I want to go back. You were asked questions about the vehicles, when they were towed and when it came back from Ceres. I believe that was a Land Rover?

HOUSE: Yes.

HARRIS: When these vehicles are towed, so there's no ambiguity about that, how were they towed?

HOUSE: They were towed on a flatbed tow truck.

HARRIS: So they're not put behind a wrecker and kind of rolled along the road?

HOUSE: No.

HARRIS: You were also asked by counsel about the headliner and how you took it out with an Exacto knife. What you did to get what you thought, or the stains that you saw that you suspected at that point in time, did any of that, any of the samples that you took affect the drivability of that vehicle?

HOUSE: No.

HARRIS: The People have no other questions.

Recross Examination by Mark Geragos

GERAGOS: What was the credit card that was used to open that Mail Boxes?

HOUSE: It's a Visa.

GERAGOS: It's a Visa. The credit card number?

HOUSE: I cannot read it in this copy.

GERAGOS: I think on the second page. I, what you're referring to as the copy is the last page of the document; is that correct?

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: Somebody copied, actually copied the credit card on a copy machine, correct?

HOUSE: Correct.

GERAGOS: I think on the second page there is a Visa card number on the application. Can you read that for the record?

HOUSE: Yes. 4217-6589-3249-8575.

GERAGOS: 85?

HOUSE: 75.

GERAGOS: And on the first page of that document, I don't have it in front of me, it lists TradeCorp?

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: And what address, from the very first page?

HOUSE: 1027 North Emerald, B 1, Modesto.

GERAGOS: And you know 1027 North Emerald, B 1, to be what?

HOUSE: The warehouse.

GERAGOS: That's on the very first page of the application, right?

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: And that's the warehouse that houses TradeCorp?

HOUSE: Yes.

GERAGOS: Thank you. No further questions.

JUDGE: May this witness be excused?

HARRIS: No objection.

GERAGOS: No objection.

JUDGE: Detective House, thank you very much.