Witness: Joanne Farmer

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Day 1 of 1 for this witness

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Direct Examination by Pat Harris

HARRIS: Hi, Joanne.

FARMER: Hi, Pat.

HARRIS: Joanne, where do you live?

FARMER: I live in San Diego.

HARRIS: I'm going to jump right in. You came to know Jackie Peterson at a fairly early age; is that correct?

FARMER: Huh?

HARRIS: What age were you when you two met?

FARMER: 14.

HARRIS: Have you stayed,

FARMER: 37 years ago.

HARRIS: You stayed in contact since that time?

FARMER: She is close. She's my sister.

HARRIS: You mean that in a figurative sense?

FARMER: Yeah.

HARRIS: How did you first meet Jackie?

FARMER: I think it was at a bus stop. We lived on opposite sides of town. We went to the same school, so we would have to transfer in the morning at Horton Plaza, which is downtown San Diego. And we would go in and get donuts and hot chocolate while we were waiting for ours. We would be feeding the pigeons. We had our uniforms on. Catholic school uniforms. We just loved how they would land on us. We were always trying to clean ourselves up before we got to class. We had a lot of fun. It was a good time.

HARRIS: Now, you knew a little bit, you came to learn a little bit about Jackie's background?

FARMER: Yeah.

HARRIS: You shared some things in terms of Jackie's background, because you didn't have a father, is that correct?

FARMER: My father died when I was eight years old of an aneurysm.

HARRIS: Jackie experienced something similar to that?

FARMER: Yes. Jackie's father was actually murdered when she was three, I believe. And she spent the next ten years in an orphanage. So she had only been home for maybe a year when I met her.

HARRIS: You say she spent the next ten years in an orphanage. Where was her mother?

FARMER: Her mother had, I can't remember the name of it. It's sclera something. She was an invalid, at any rate. So she was hospitalized for quite a while, unable to take care of the four children. So they were in what's called Nazareth House, Catholic.

HARRIS: Four children. Jackie was one of four children?

FARMER: Uh-huh.

HARRIS: Were the other three brothers, sisters?

FARMER: She has an older brother John. And then there is Patrick and Jackie and Robert. Robert is the youngest.

HARRIS: When you met Jackie, she had moved back home out of the orphanage?

FARMER: Yes.

HARRIS: She was attending Catholic school?

FARMER: Yes.

HARRIS: Was that in San Diego?

FARMER: Uh-huh.

HARRIS: What do you remember Jackie being like in those days?

FARMER: She was fun. She still is fun. She laughs a lot. She is always looking on the bright side. I don't think I have ever seen Jackie really, really down. Always manages to see the good in people. And I don't think she has an enemy in the world. We all rally around her as much as we can, because it's fun to be with her.

HARRIS: As you grew a little older, did you end up sort of being separated at some point?

FARMER: Yes. I left San Diego when I was 16, and we moved to Northern California. And in Santa Barbara. And so we did not physically have contact for quite a while. We never lost touch with each other. We were always either telephoning, or writing letters, or trying to keep up, you know, where we were in our lives at that point in time.

HARRIS: When you were separated, did you get to see Jackie interact with her mother in her home?

FARMER: Yes, I did.

HARRIS: What was that like?

FARMER: They were very close. Helen was a dear, dear woman. Jackie is a lot like her, just sweet. Just the nicest person you ever want to meet. And I got to spend some time, fortunately, before she passed away. So that was kind of nice.

HARRIS: Was it difficult for Jackie in the household?

FARMER: Yes, I believe so. She was the only girl. And the boys expected her to do everything for Helen and for them, I think. So she had a real rough time with it.

HARRIS: Now, did Jackie also know your mother?

FARMER: Oh, yes. My mother took Jackie under her wing, because Jackie and I were so close. And when her mother died, naturally just became closer to my mother. And I used to tease her and say, "Mom likes you better than me." It was the truth in some respects, because Jackie was, didn't get a divorce, and I did. So my mother, she told Jackie, "Don't do as Joanne did. Stay married." She kind of listened to her.

HARRIS: When you separated, when you went separate ways, did you stay in contact?

FARMER: Oh, yes. We have never lost touch with each other, ever. We have always, we may not see each other a lot during those years, but we certainly knew where the other person was in their life, what was going on, and the children. Just like family.

HARRIS: Back then did you notice any, Jackie had any health problems?

FARMER: Jackie has always had health problems as long as I have know her. She has bronchitis. And she would get it almost constantly. I thought it was kind of fun, because she had this wonderful voice that all of us girls would love to have had. Not realizing, of course, that she really was quite ill.

HARRIS: At some point did you end up coming back to, back to San Diego?

FARMER: Yes. I came back to San Diego in, I think it was 1982 after my mother died. We had, well, my sons and I actually moved to Utica, New York, for four years after my divorce. And when my mom died, she lived with us in Utica. We came back to San Diego. And Jackie and I just picked up where we left off. In fact, she was the first person I called when I got back to town. We just talked for two hours.

HARRIS: Let me backtrack a minute, because maybe I missed a step. I know you separated, went for a while. Then was there a period you moved back to San Diego then, before you went to New York? Maybe I misunderstood that.

FARMER: No. I went to Santa Barbara when I was 17. And I was married when I was 20. Then my husband and I moved up to this area. Actually we lived in Cupertino. And I did not come back here actually until after my mother, or after my mother had passed away.

HARRIS: You became aware at some point that Jackie met Lee Peterson?

FARMER: Yes, I sure did.

HARRIS: And you have been able to observe their marriage?

FARMER: Oh, it's like Jackie-Lee. You don't separate one from the other. They have always been close. They have always been very loving, and just a great couple. I have never heard them, they respect each other very highly. And I have never heard them have an argument, or even say anything, you know, toward that. They just are sweet, sweet people. They are a sweet couple.

HARRIS: After they were married, did you have an opportunity at different points to babysit John, the son?

FARMER: Yes. I took care of John quite a bit. My sons were almost the same age as, I think John is just between my two boys, and, age-wise. And so I would have John on the weekends, and things like that, because he was basically the only child, and he loved playing with my kids. So he could come over quite a bit.

HARRIS: And then a little white after that Scott was born?

FARMER: Uh-huh.

HARRIS: Did you also have opportunities to babysit him?

FARMER: Uh-huh. Yeah, I sure did. I begged for that opportunity. My son was, I think, six when Scott was born, my youngest one. And so it was just great having a baby in the house again. My

mom was visiting us. I remember one time in particular, I think it was New Year's Eve, and Jackie and Lee had gone out, and I was an old married lady. They had only been married two years at the time. We had Scott for the weekend. We just fought over his, just so sweet. And not the, my kids are brats. One of them is sitting here resents that. But Scott never seems like that. He was such a sweet, sweet baby and a sweet little boy. I mean, you know, through up to the age of four, knowing I was physically in his life until the age of four, and then I did move. I'm sorry, I think I'm a little confused. I did, I went to Utica. Yes, I did come back here, then I went to Utica from, yeah. So he was four years old when I did leave town to move to New York. And when I returned Scott was 10.

HARRIS: Did you ever see, when he was, when he was around three or four, did you ever see him interacting with adults?

FARMER: With who?

HARRIS: With adults, party, anything like that?

FARMER: Yes, a little bit. I wasn't, I know that Jackie and Lee golfed a lot, and I know that they would go along with them. Loved it. Is that what you asked me?

HARRIS: Yeah, sort of how he was. I think you mentioned at one time,

FARMER: Well, there was a story of Scott taking a little fishing pole with him at first when he was only like two or three, I think. And while they were golfing, there was a little pond there. And Scott would go fishing before he was really into the golf avidly.

HARRIS: You also mentioned a story about him serving cookies.

FARMER: Oh. Jackie and Lee had holiday parties and Scott, I think was probably 11 or 12. And he was such a gentleman. I mean everybody could not believe this child, because he was would serve cookies. He would come around, talk to the adults. He was very, very respectful, and very interested in everything everybody had to say. I mean he was, you know, he was, genuinely cared about the adults there. And it was very refreshing to see a young man like that. Most of the boys at that age, you know, adults were somebody you avoided. But Scott never seemed to do that. He was always very friendly. Very polite.

HARRIS: You got to see him interact with his father as well; is that right?

FARMER: Uh-huh.

HARRIS: How would you describe that interaction?

FARMER: He was a shadow. He kind of followed him around a lot, and wanted to do everything lee did. Very much like Lee and Jackie. Three of them. Really it's hard to, personality-wise, they are just, they are very close, because they are all quiet people, but they keep a lot inside, and so it looks like they are not showing any emotion. That's not the way it is. It's just that they have, over the years, have just decided they are not going to show the public that side of them. So they have feelings. They have emotions. And I know, I have been there. But it's, they are not real public about it.

HARRIS: You talked about you came back from Utica. By this time Scott was a teenager?

FARMER: Uh-huh. Well, about 12, yeah. 10 or 12.

HARRIS: Was he, as you watched him mature, and you watched him grow, did he share a lot of those teenage sort of wild rebellious?

FARMER: Oh, gosh, no.

HARRIS: What was he like?

FARMER: He was like he always was. I mean Scott never seemed to change. He was always the gentleman. He was always polite. He was a very loving child. He had lots of interests. They kept him busy with sports, and golfing, and all of these other things, and working at the crating place. He liked to go out there back when he was younger and build things with nails and wood that was left over from the crating. But he, I don't think he ever went through a rebellious time. My kids did, but Scott didn't, I think, because he had a secure home. He had the security. Both his parents. And both were loving parents. And they doted on him. So did the rest of the family. And so there was nothing for him to rebel against. He just was very, very happy child.

HARRIS: Did he return that love?

FARMER: Oh, absolutely. Gosh, yeah. Yes. I'm Aunt Joanne. Yeah, he's, he definitely is a loving person.

HARRIS: You had a chance to watch what has happened in terms of the last couple of years I know. How has that affected Lee?

FARMER: I have watched Lee age about ten years in the last two. His heart is broken. All of our hearts are broken. And he is just devastated.

HARRIS: How has it affected Jackie?

FARMER: Same way. She's brokenhearted. Her health seems to be holding its own, but I worry about both of them. I really do, their health. I don't know how much more they can take. I don't know how they have taken this much.

HARRIS: As someone who has watched Scott from the time he was born, has known him the entire time he's been alive, what effect would it have on you if he was put to death?

FARMER: Oh, God. I don't want to go there either. I was at work when I heard the verdict. And I just screamed. They heard me up and down the hall. I had to leave. And I can't think like that.

HARRIS: That's the all I have. Thank you, Judge.