Witness: Charles P. Courtney

Date: 2004-12-06

Proceedings held December 6, 2004

Called by: Defense

Phase: Penalty

Examinations: Direct – 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/Courtney.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 Mark Geragos

GERAGOS: Good morning, Mr. Courtney.

COURTNEY: Good morning.

GERAGOS: You described yourself as an, I guess a golf pro emeritus to me this morning when I was talking to you, is that right?

COURTNEY: That's correct. That's my title these days.

GERAGOS: You had worked at a club. What was the name of the club?

COURTNEY: The Rancho Santa Fe Golf Club.

GERAGOS: For how long?

COURTNEY: I started there in June the first of 1983, until, I was Head Professional/Director of Golf, until July 1 of this year, at which time I became the Professional Emeritus at the club.

GERAGOS: In that role, did you have people who worked for you at the club?

COURTNEY: I did. Lots of them. Lots of young people.

GERAGOS: Do you have, generally did you have a policy against hiring members' kids?

COURTNEY: Well, there was nothing official, but I had sort of a mental stop when it came to hiring our members' children, or the kids from the community.

GERAGOS:. There is a reason for that?

COURTNEY: Well, they are precocious young people, and we're not, some of them precocious, very bright as a group, but unreliable, and a little bit, if you will, flaky from time-to-time. And so I just was very reluctant to hire the local kids. I usually got some kids from Solano Beach, Del Mar, hopefully closer-in areas. But our Rancho kids, by and large I have only had a couple of them worked for me over all these years that were worth a darn, frankly.

GERAGOS: Scott Peterson one of those?

COURTNEY: Absolutely, Scott was one of them. He was a terrific young employee for us, and member in general, yeah.

GERAGOS: How long, I know it's been a number of years.

COURTNEY: It has been.

GERAGOS: How long do you estimate he worked for you?

COURTNEY: I can't be sure, and seeing how I'm not an employer any more, my situation changed a little bit. The club took over all the employees some years ago, in the late nineties. So eventually I, through all my employment, put away the employment records, so I can't, I can't recall exactly when Scott was my employee, or how long. But I'm quite sure it was more than a year, and probably two years. Just not sure.

GERAGOS: Okay. During that time, did you interact with him on a daily, or three-or-four-times-a-week basis?

COURTNEY: Yes. As he was, of course, a member, son of a family that was a member of the club, and also as an employee. And Scott was always very reliable. And from the standpoint of being a member and following the rules, and being just a great kid. And he was very reliable employee as well.

GERAGOS: What kind of things would you have him do?

COURTNEY: Well, his main job was to pick up the golf balls on the driving range, which is like the bottom end of the pool. It sometimes can be dangerous, boring, cold. Have to go out there in the evening. So on, I remember one specifically time that, our equipment had tended to be not the finest or best, and our picker power pack, has a cage on it, which the driver stays inside so when he's picking up the balls he doesn't get hit with any golf balls. The picker broke down, and I kind of demanded of Scott, I don't think I would do that today, but I did that, I demanded of Scott go out and pick up the balls. Put a hard hat on and pick up the balls. Ride around in another unit. He objected as anybody should have. He did it, I wouldn't say with a smile on his face necessarily. Just a great kid to have around the place and to have reliable.

GERAGOS: Did you ever see anything in him that would indicate to you that he'd be sitting here today dealing with this?

COURTNEY: Nothing in my recollection that could, you can't reconcile what's happened with what I knew about him as a young man. He was just outstanding with his family, and as an employee, as a club member, no problem. It's a shocking,

GERAGOS: I gather, just from knowing you the last day or so, pretty good sense of humor, and can rip at people a little bit. Do you, did you used to do this with your employees, and particularly Scott?

COURTNEY: Not so much about his behavior as a performance as an employee. But Scott had a little technical thing. I'm sure he can remember this. Our golf shop was right behind the first tee in those days, so the staff could stand right there in the window and watch as he was going to go out and play with Jackie and Lee in the afternoon. And particularly, in particular, as a younger golfer, he had this, it's technical. It wouldn't probably mean anything to the court or the jury. He had a tendency, because of the way he did his golf swing, his ball would just go off to the right, would go off to the right rough. He did that for a year or two. As staff, I was always interested in him doing better. I tried to get him to adjust his grip so he didn't hit that slice. I always tried to tell him, Scott, you got to quit hitting that slice and hit a high hard hook. It took ribbing. We got him to do that. It took a little ribbing. I could be a little tough on him. He didn't mind. We finally got it done. As the court has heard, he's turned into a pretty darn good little player.

GERAGOS: Did you ever have the, going back to what I have asked you before, not hiring members, the members' kids, or not wanting to. I assume there was some, I guess, stereotype, come from privilege, that the kids of privilege generally have an attitude or a snobbery about them. Did you ever see that with Scott?

COURTNEY: Never.

GERAGOS: How would you characterize his personality?

COURTNEY: Easy to be around. Quiet somebody else mentioned earlier. Very responsive and respectful of the staff. I say that because I can contrast it against some of our other precocious young people we have had in the community. I'm not saying they are bad kids, but they do come from some privilege, and maybe wear it on their sleeve once in a while. Not so with Scott. Just a great young man to be around.

GERAGOS: Do you, you have heard me ask the question of others. This jury is being asked to put Scott to death. Do you have an opinion on that?

COURTNEY: Well, based on my experience with him, I don't think that should be so at all.

GERAGOS: Reason for that?

COURTNEY: Well, just is such a fine young man, that all the few years from about 84 until about 1990 when I knew him, I just, this whole thing is inconceivable to me, this could be happening. That's almost about only thing I can say, Mr. Geragos.

GERAGOS: Thank you. I appreciate you making the trip, Mr. Courtney.