Witness: Ronald Roger Rowe

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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)

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Direct Examination by Mark Geragos

GERAGOS: Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Rowe. Could you tell the jury, obviously you are here for Scott's case. And you know Scott Peterson how?

ROWE: As a student in the district in which I was superintendent-principal for some 37 years. And six years before that as a teacher there in the same district.

GERAGOS: And we called you up to tell the jury what you knew about Scott back then, when you were, when he was in, I guess, grade school, is that correct?

ROWE: That's correct. Grade six, seven and eight.

GERAGOS: How did you come to, come to that location there in Rancho Santa Fe?

ROWE: It was my good fortune to be selected to be a teacher in the school district back in 1958. And I moved there following return to active duty in the Navy in 61 and 62 to become a teaching principal. And in 1964 when my predecessor decided to return to the university work, I was named the district superintendent. And I came there following service as a teacher in Kansas City, Missouri, for two years and in Coronado, California, for one year.

GERAGOS: When you had, when Scott came through the school, what grade you say was the first time you have some memory of him?

ROWE: Grade six.

GERAGOS: Grade six. And at that point what was your position at the school?

ROWE: I was a principal-superintendent.

GERAGOS: Would you say, is this a, what kind of a school? Small, large?

ROWE: It was, at that time, a school of 400 plus students in a community of about 2500 individuals. It was a K-8 school district, all on one campus. So Scott was a student on that same campus in the last year of elementary school, grade six, and in the only two years of junior high school, grades seven and eight.

GERAGOS: When you, and you saved yearbooks, I guess, throughout the years when you were teaching, is that correct?

ROWE: For most of those years yes. I believe you have pages from the year book of 1983-84 when Scott was a sixth grader, yes.

GERAGOS: When I met with you this morning, you handed me, I made some copies.

JUDGE: Mark those on the record.

GERAGOS: Yes, I'm going to, as soon as,

GERAGOS: These two pages?

ROWE: Yes.

GERAGOS: Out of that year book?

ROWE: Yes. This is the class picture.

GERAGOS: That would be D9N-2.

JUDGE: Okay. Photo of the defendant?

ROWE: Yes. And this picture, Junior Varsity Football, the fall of 1983. And he is third from the right, top row, next to Chris Love.

GERAGOS: Okay. That was D9N-1. Been a number of years since you have seen Scott Peterson, is that correct?

ROWE: That's correct.

GERAGOS: You do have, as you sit here, you have a memory of him?

ROWE: Yes. As a small school enrolling only 400 students, it was my privilege to have the opportunity to visit each classroom several times a week, and some cases almost daily.

GERAGOS: And that's Scott third from the right in the back row?

ROWE: That is correct.

GERAGOS: And that was D9N-1. This is D9N-2. That's Scott right there?

ROWE: Yes, that is correct.

GERAGOS: Okay. And your memory of Scott at that point was what, as a what kind of student?

ROWE: He was a cooperative, industrious young man. Fit in well with his classmates. Cooperative with his teachers. Dependable. A bit quieter than many of his classmates. And in all regards was a fine school citizen at those three grades levels, grade six, seven and eight.

GERAGOS: How did you see him, or did you notice how he interacted with others?

ROWE: He fit in well with his students. As the years went on, there weren't that, in grade six, seven, and eight, he became particularly active in the golf program which, the course is adjacent to the school. And so I would notice that he and other youngsters from his class or grade level, actually some of them were in the same grade level, different class, were together to golf.

GERAGOS: Did you, did you ever have any problems with him in any way, shape, or form?

ROWE: I recall no problems.

GERAGOS: Okay.

ROWE: None.

GERAGOS: You had mentioned today that he was a little quieter than the others. Did you find that to be a problem?

ROWE: I thought it was kind of a blessing at times.

GERAGOS: And do you know why you are here today?

ROWE: The jury is being asked by the prosecution to put Scott to death.

GERAGOS: Do you have an opinion as to whether or not that's something that you would recommend to the jury?

ROWE: That he be put to death?

GERAGOS: Yes.

ROWE: I couldn't recommend that. It certainly was nothing that would have been predicted at the time he was a young man of 12, 13 and 14 years of age. I suppose it's typical of a small school district, teacher or principal or superintendent, to look for the, to find things from his or her students to look at, hope that each of their lives will be in accordance with the promise that they exhibit during those formative years. And certainly Scott was a young man in whom I had great confidence. And nothing that I could envision then or now would suggest to me that the death penalty is appropriate for him.

GERAGOS: Thank you. I have no further questions.