Witness: Brent Rocha

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Day 1 of 1 for this witness

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D. HARRIS: Yes, your Honor, there are several members that wish to. And the first one would be Brent Rocha.

JUDGE: Brent Rocha. Mr. Rocha, you can speak from the lectern there. And keep your voice up so we can all hear you, okay? There's no microphone there I noticed. Maybe that would reach there.

ROCHA: Okay. It's difficult, Scott, to get up here and speak to you of what you've done, you know. It's not an easy thing to do, to actually confront the killer of Laci. I mean everything that you have put us through and our family, your family; I mean you just can't even begin to understand what's gone on behind the scenes. You've been sheltered in your jail cell. You just, you have no idea of what we've gone through. Laci and Conner are the true victims here, but you've also caused a lot of other people a significant amount of pain. It's also difficult to be up here to talk to you because I don't know how much you understand, or how much you comprehend, what emotional level you have, or how much feeling you can have, but I'm going to do it anyway, even though it may not, it might bounce right off of you. Maybe this act of your arrogance and confidence is a coping mechanism, but at some point in time you're going to have to face reality for what you've done. Of course I wonder, like everyone else, why you chose to kill. Surely now that you have been convicted and are as soon to be sentenced to death, I would hope that you regret the choices that you made. Maybe you don't. But what I don't understand is how do you not know that's not right to take someone else's life? Why did you have to kill? I mean, did you really hate Laci and Conner that much? Or did you dislike yourself?

You know, we all wonder why you did this because I think, for the most part, we all loved you like a member of the family. And like your family and my family, maybe all the members of your family, we were just shocked that you could have done what you've done. Although you've committed this crime, you still go on as if nothing's happened, joke and laugh behind the scenes in your jail cell. The only thing that I could say that we saw something negative about you is you thought you were better than everyone else. Even when Rose and I would come down and visit you and Laci, you always had this arrogance about you or you thought you were more entitled to more privileges. I never would have thought that would have led to murder or anything like that. But I wonder, I mean, why did you feel you were better than everyone else? As you said it yourself, you thought you were smarter than 70 percent of the other population, members of the population. I don't know, is it because your parents gave you money, you had a good golf game? I can't really think of what else you might be better at, other than those two things, but my personal take is that you just used the persona of a rich kid to make yourself feel better. I mean, you never really got a chance to know yourself and let people like you for who you are other than

for your money.

JACKIE PETERSON: Brent, that isn't true at all.

ROCHA: It had to be for selfish reasons that you killed Laci and Conner. You did it so your life would not be changed, your persona of the rich kid would still be intact. You knew you were living beyond your means. You didn't have the mental strength to support your family. Your dual life would have been over if Conner came into the picture. We sat in the pool, your pool, in the summer of 2002, and you talked to me about not doing good in your job, turning 30 years old, got a baby on the way. I mean, you were down. I mean, it was quite obvious. I testified to that, and you shook your head as if I was lying.

LEE PETERSON: You're a liar.

ROCHA: I know what the truth is, and you're denying that.

JUDGE: Excuse me. If there's any, I don't care who you are, if you interrupt the proceedings, you're going to be removed from the courtroom, all right? You're welcome to be here. I have your letter, I'm going to make it part of the probation report. I will not tolerate anybody calling out in the audience, I don't care who you are. So be advised, the next one who opens their mouth is going to be removed from the courtroom. Period. Go ahead.

ROCHA: Between you and me you know it was the truth. We were in that pool together. We know what took place.

(Lee Peterson exits courtroom)

ROCHA: I told you at that time money wasn't everything, there was so much more to life. And I can tell you, Scott, my two sons have brought me more joy than I could ever imagine. You will never know how great your life could have been if you had let things happen the way they should have happened. There was also a time in 1999 where you cried about the way you were raised. Right after my grandmother's funeral, you cried to Laci and you cried to Rose. There's issues there, Scott, I mean with you and your parents. I don't know what they are, but they're still no justification for the actions you've taken. You're evil and you still have the readiness to commit evil. Death is the appropriate punishment for your crime, and I knew that immediately, when Laci was missing, that you were responsible. On January 4th, 2003 I went and bought a gun. I already knew at that point in time you were guilty. I chose not to kill you myself for one reason: So you would have to sweat it out and not take the easy way out. I'm grateful I made the right decision. You have shown no remorse for your actions. It's just hard to believe that you can carry on with life as if you didn't commit this crime, and it's, it's not comprehendible to me. You slept in the same bed with Laci for two weeks, knowing that you were going to kill her. You ate the food that she cooked, knowing that you were going to kill her. You asked her brother to go golfing, you let her sister cut her hair, you toasted her mother about what a wonderful daughter she had, knowing the whole time you were going to kill, you were planning to kill Laci. I mean, you don't have any compassion? What happened? I mean, were you depressed? Were you, did you panic? Were you scared? Were you angry? I mean why?

(Jackie Peterson leaves courtroom)

ROCHA: You know, our lives are consumed with this murder. You've ruined our lives. Every time I come over to the Bay Area what I think is Oh, my sister's head is probably rolling around the bottom of the Bay. Do you even give any thought to what you've done? I mean, you made it, my mother has been through hell. You made a mess of her life. The torture; you'll just never understand what, what you've caused. Okay, Scott. My last couple thoughts. Since I probably will never speak to you again, this is why I'm here saying what I want you to know. You chose to kill a woman who was five foot tall and pregnant. I mean, you're over six foot. Are you proud of your accomplishment? You pulled off your task? How does it feel to be a baby killer?

You're so far from the perfect rich kid persona that was so important to you. I don't know where your anger came from, but you are truly a loser: You lost your golf scholarship at college, you ruined your marriage, you spent all of the money that your parents gave you, you opened a business that failed, and you couldn't handle selling your fertilizer. You should take a look at why this, why it was that you were not able to succeed in life. Everything was handed to you so you didn't have to develop the skills to be a successful adult. I think that the anger you displayed towards Laci and Conner should have been turned towards yourself. It wasn't their fault you weren't succeeding; it was your own.

For my final comment I just wanted you to know that it feels good knowing that you don't want to be in jail. You did not want to be convicted of this crime. In the beginning of the trial you shuffled through papers and you even provided your counsel with responses, trying to work your way out of this mess. You even shook your head, I already did that point. Past it now. You have manipulated and embarrassed your parents. You should see how pathetic your mom looks moving out all of your personal belonging from your house without her oxygen tank. It's really a sad thing you've put our mothers through. During this trial you were diligently fighting for your life. It was somewhat gratifying to see the noose tightening around your neck and to hear that you were vomiting in your cell before the verdict came in. You weren't a guy that didn't care anymore or that just gave up. You were just a spoiled child that only cared about yourself. Scott, you are really a delusional liar and are so disconnected from reality, you probably still think you're going to get off. You're probably sitting there right now thinking you're going get off on appeal, I bet. It may take 25 years before you're executed, and maybe then you will see the reality of your life. By the way, when you walk to that execution room, take a look out the window. You'll see Brooks Island, and then you can know that Laci and Conner have come to get you and take you away. Thank you, your Honor.

JUDGE: Thank you. I'm going to ask the rest of the speakers, with the exception of Mrs. Rocha, to be a little briefer because we've got a long way to go here.