

✓ Mystery witness' describes sex

10-16-86
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SANTA CRUZ — The so-called mystery witness in the Father John Karastamatis murder case testified last week that the slain priest had forced her twice to perform oral sex.

The woman's testimony, which was given behind closed courtroom doors last week, was made public Wednesday.

The testimony makes up 31 type-written pages. The woman, in her mid-20s, was on the witness stand for more than an hour and a half, but the total of her testimony was only 15 or 20 minutes. The remainder was consumed by pauses, some as long as five minutes during which time the woman just sat and stared, according to District Attorney Art Danner. Danner asked no questions of the witness. "Don't infer anything from

that. I did so only because of the emotional trauma the woman was suffering," he said.

Municipal Court Judge Richard Kessell allowed Public defender Jerry Christensen to ask leading questions and accepted nods and head shakes for answers when the woman broke down in tears.

The following are excerpts of her testimony:

Q: Can you tell me how you came

to know the Karastamatis family?

A: (Nodding head up and down). I moved to Santa Cruz March of 1979, and shortly after that, couple of months later, they were holding services at Monterey Bay Academy, just on Sundays. They were still a missionary church and nothing was — it was just a missionary church.

So I was attending services there. It was just a very scarce number of

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people who would attend, just because it was new. And it seemed like our friendship bonded quickly.

There was a day called Epiphany where they throw a cross into the ocean, Jan. 6, and I drove with them over there with Presbyteria (Father John's wife) and Maria and Irene, their cousin, and couple of other people.

And at Easter time — Easter services are from anywhere from 10 o'clock in the evening until maybe 2:30 or so in the morning. And then they had a dinner at their house afterwards early that next morning and they invited me.

And they just took me under their wing very quickly. Their daughter said she knew we would be friends just from when we first met. They just — they saw that I was alone because I had moved here from Los Angeles and — (pauses).

My father left when I was about a year and a half old and they — Father John and his wife and children just became a real anchor for me in my life, a stability that I could come to and they would — they were nurturing me, from the very beginning we were close. And I would be at their home three weeks at a time, then I would go to my own for a couple days to pick up mail or to see how everything was over there, then go back to my own home — I mean go back to their home for a couple of weeks.

And that was the pattern. They always made room for me wherever

— if they would go to company, they would take me along without any hesitation.

There was something which is a — they would go to the Bishop's house and they would take me along. If they would go to dinner, dances, the church functions, they would always bring me along. They just were a very loving family that — just really looked out for me.

(Questions and answers then centered around her involvement in the church.)

Q: And did you consider Foti and Maria (the priest's children) to be like your brother and sister?

A: Yes.

Q: And Father John and Presbyteria were sort of like your mom and dad?

A: Yes.

Q: And was Father John your priest?

A: Yes.

Q: And coming here and testifying is something which is a painful thing for you; isn't that right?

A: Yes.

Q: And you certainly don't in any way want to hurt Presbyteria or Foti or Maria because they are like family; is that right?

A: Yes.

Q: I am sorry that upset you, but I know that needs to be said. But that is right, you don't want to hurt them?

A: Not at all. I love them dearly. I have never been so close to anyone in my life. When I would walk in church and Father saw me upset, he would take it completely personal. He

would say, "Is there something wrong? Has someone hurt you? Do you need money?"

Q: And you are really only here because I subpoenaed you to come here; isn't that right?

A: Yes. I had no intention of — I tried not to, I — I didn't want to be here.

(The next series of questions, omitted here, pertained to meetings she had with investigators and Daner.)

Q: Now, I want to ask you about a time period when Father John's family was in Greece. I am going to ask you as nice as I can. We will get through it as quickly as we can, too.

Was there a time period when the two of you were preparing a bulletin and you stayed there later on and were in the upstairs quarters?

A: (Pauses)

(No response)

Q: Just shake your head if you don't want to talk to me.

A: (Pauses)

(No response)

Q: If you allow me, I will even ask you further things, maybe you can say "yes" or of course say "no" at any time you like.

Were you upstairs — offered some coffee, asked to go into Foti's room, asked to sit on the bed and then, in fact, asked to lie down on the bed and then have Father John attempt to lie down with you and embrace you?

A: (Pauses)

(No response)

(There followed questions by Judge Richard Kessell about whether she was feeling OK and whether she need a break. A minister who accompanied her said she could continue.)

A: He was lying down and said for me to sit. So I sat on the edge and he said to lie down.

I lied down and he started pulling me closer and then I got up and went to the other room.

Q: Is it fair to say you were shocked by that and that he followed you in the other room, and he at that point in time caressed you and kissed you?

A: (Nodding head up and down.)

Q: At that point in time did you indicate to him, you know, how shocked you were by that and that he was your priest and he had a family that was like family to you?

A: (Nodding head up and down.)

Q: Is it fair to state that you left at that time and that Father John came and contacted you in some way and asked you to come back; is that right?

A: No. I made a strong objection.

Q: You made a strong objection?

A: And then when he realized that I wasn't yielding or budging, he sat down and became very red-faced and upset. He couldn't look me in the eye and knew it was a mistake.

And I didn't want — I still loved him as a father, that's the only way I wanted it.

Q: Everybody understands that, believe me.

A: And he couldn't look at me and I knew it was a mistake and that — I forgave him, because he was family. And the community was not strong in a bond or anything closely knit, so it was like he didn't really have a lot of — I guess he had a lot of frustration built up from all the tension in the community.

And I told him I understood that, that it was a mistake and that I forgave it.

And I said, "I know it is a mistake." I go, "And, I trust you."

(The next series of questions dealt with her return to the church a short time later)

Q: Did he do the same type of thing?

A: (Nodding head up and down)

Q: Is that a yes?

A: (Nodding head up and down)

Q: And were you so shocked by that that you drove home like just feeling almost sort of, you know, almost delirious with pain or whatever at that point in time?

A: I was upset, yes.

Q: Did he do anything worse than he had done the first time or do just the same kind of thing?

A: The same.

(The next series of questions dealt with Father John going to see her after that incident and her telling him she was leaving the church.)

Q: How long was this that you stayed away from the church and the Karastamatis family?

A: I know it was — it was at least, without going back, without any contact, I think it was a year. I am trying to remember. I think that's about how long it was, at least.

Q: And were there more passes — inappropriate things by Father John around the time period of Maria's wedding?

A: (Nodding head up and down)

Q: That, of course, upset you very much again; didn't it?

A: (Nodding head up and down)

Q: And as part of that, he would like fondle you sexually, right, I mean inappropriately? That's right, isn't it?

A: (Pauses)

(No response)

And you told Detective (Ron) Truhitte that; didn't you?

A: (Nodding head up and down.)

Q: All right. You were never a willing person in regard to that; were you?

A: (Shakes head from side to side).

Q: That is a "no." And you were forced to do those things; weren't you?

A: (Pauses)

(No response)

Q: You were forced to do these things, weren't you?

A: Can I take a recess? I have a headache.

(Recess granted.)

Q: Wasn't there a time period when Maria had gone to visit a sick friend and you were in the main area upstairs with Father John, he had

you sit on the couch and and was real aggressive with you?

That happened, didn't it?

A: (Pauses)

(No response)

Q: Did that happen?

A: (Pauses)

Q: And even though you tried to make him not do it by trying to keep working and even trying to maybe even use a Judo move or something like that, at that point in time he forced you to orally copulate him; didn't he?

You can just answer me "yes" or "no." It will only take a couple of minutes. I have only a couple more questions.

A: (Pauses)

(No response)

Q: Did he do that at that time?

A: (Pauses)

(No response)

Q: You just have to shake your head, we will soon be done with this.

A: (Pauses)

What does this have to do with the murder?

Q: Well, I think that is ultimately for the jury to find out whether it does or not. But just in regard to telling the truth, did that, in fact, happen?

(There follows a series of no responses to that question repeated several times.)

Q: Did Father John ... force you to do oral sex? Is that a "yes?" I couldn't tell if you were nodding.

A: (No response)

Q: All you have to do is shake your head. And I only have a couple more questions, like I said, and it will be all over.

(After the question is repeated several more times, the witness shakes her head "yes.")

Q: Even though you tried to ex-

plain it, you were humiliated by it, were you forced to do that one other time? And that's the last question I have for you.

A: (Pauses)

(No response.)

Q: Did Father John give you a ride home and force you to do that again?

Last question. All you have to do is shake your head and we are all done.

A: (Pauses)

(No response)

Q: I think you probably told (your ministers) about this second incident; didn't you tell them — did you tell them?

A: (Pauses)

(No response)

Q: Again, they are your friends and they are going to support you. That's the last question I really have, whether that's the truth, whether it was done a second time. Is that the truth?

A: (Pauses)

(No response)

Q: As painful as it is, you still have to tell the truth. Was that the truth. Did it happen a second time? You were forced to do it a second time? All you have to do is shake your head and we are done. Is that the truth?

A: (Pauses)

(No response.)

Q: Let me ask you this way. The second time it happened, even though you didn't resist because you just didn't feel that you could at that point in time, did it happen that second time?

A: (Pauses)

(Nodding head up and down.)

Q: That was a "yes."

JUDGE: She nodded "yes."

CHRISTENSEN: Thank you. I apologize. I think you are a wonderful person.