

DREW PETERSON APPEAL HEARD IN 5th DISTRICT APPELLATE COURT USING VIDEO CONFERENCING

MT. VERNON, ILLINOIS

June 4, 2020

The Fifth District Appellate Court heard arguments on yet another appeal by Drew Peterson, who has already been convicted of murder. This appeal involved Peterson's conviction for soliciting another individual to kill James Glasgow, the Will County State's Attorney who prosecuted Peterson for the murder of Peterson's third wife. The State alleged in this case that Peterson solicited the murder of Glasgow as revenge for the prior murder prosecution.

On March 1, 2004, Kathleen Savio, Peterson's third wife, was found dead in the bathtub of her Bolingbrook home. There was no water found in the bathtub. Although Savio and Peterson were divorced, there were still property issues to resolve. Drew Peterson was a police officer in Bolingbrook at the time of Savio's death. An independent investigation concluded the death was accidental, and no criminal charges were filed.

In October 2007, Peterson's fourth wife, Stacey Peterson, went missing. Subsequently, the authorities conducted a further investigation regarding the cause of the death of Kathleen Savio. After an extensive investigation, Peterson was charged with the murder of Savio. A jury convicted Peterson in September 2012 of murdering his wife, and Peterson was sentenced to 38 years in prison. Peterson has exhausted his appeals on his murder conviction.

Subsequently, on February 9, 2015, Drew Peterson was charged in Randolph County, Illinois, for soliciting the murder of James Glasgow. Peterson's alleged motive for killing Glasgow included the fact that Glasgow had prosecuted Peterson for Savio's murder and was still looking for a way to prosecute Peterson for Stacy's disappearance. Glasgow had also prosecuted Peterson for unlawfully transferring a gun to his son, Stephen. At the time, Stephen was a police officer and was ultimately fired from his job. Peterson was convicted of murder for hire and was sentenced to 40

years in prison. His appeal on the murder for hire conviction was before the Appellate Court on June 4, 2020.

Using the new video conferencing technology, both the Assistant Attorney General, Leah Bendik, and Peterson's Appellate Public Defender, Dimitri Golfis, were able to make their arguments remotely. The three judge panel included Justice Judy Cates, as Presiding Justice, Justice John Barberis, and Justice Milton Wharton. Peterson's counsel argued that the jury's verdict on the murder for hire conviction should be reversed because the wiretap was not properly obtained. Mr. Golfis argued that the Chief Judge for Will County should not have gone into the Stateville prison to interview the individual who Peterson had solicited, and by doing so, the judge had a conflict of interest in the case and could not be impartial. Golfis argued that the judge "did law enforcement's job." This same judge issued the wiretap authorizations. Likewise, James Glasgow was involved in the investigation and issued the eavesdropping authorizations which were used against Peterson at trial. Peterson also claimed he was denied a fair trial because of the many errors committed by the trial judge, including allowing the State to mention the disappearance of Stacy Peterson. The entire argument can be heard on June 5 at http://illinoiscourts.gov/Media/Appellate/5th_District.asp.

At the conclusion of the arguments, Presiding Justice Cates indicated the matter would be taken under advisement. The 5th District Appellate Court was the first court in the state to use video conferencing for an oral argument.

"On April 30th, with the other judges present, I was proud of our court system in conducting the first oral argument with the new technology," said Justice Cates. "The justices were so pleased with the success in our 'test' argument, we decided to offer additional arguments this month, and expect to continue keeping our court open until we can get back into the courthouse in Mt. Vernon," Cates added.

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