

Defense witness suggests suicide in former ISP trooper's wife's death

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COEUR D' ALENE, Idaho - The final defense witnesses in the murder trial for Daniel Howard, a former Idaho State Police (ISP) trooper, took the stand on Monday.

The defense's expert witness, Dr. Geoffrey Desmoulin, out of Canada, took the stand Monday morning. He testified to reviewing the autopsy report, conducted by former Spokane County Medical Examiner Dr. John Howard, as well as body and scene photographs prior to his testimony.

Kendy Howard was found with a gunshot wound in the couple's bathtub inside their Athol home. Prosecutors maintain she was murdered before the gunshot wound and that the scene was staged to appear like a suicide.

Desmoulin testified that based on the evidence he reviewed, he sought to rule out a suicide. The defense believes Kendy shot herself.

"(It was) horizontal to slightly downwards," he testified to the trajectory of the bullet.

He testified to simulating ten scenarios to help come to his conclusions.

"This is physics driven," Desmoulin testified.



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He testified Kendy had a mark on her hand, which he testified could have come from the firearm following a self-inflicted shot. Under cross-examination, he testified that it was also consistent with other potential injuries.

He further testified to performing tests regarding the blood on Kendy's face under her matted hair. He told the jury he tested blood accumulation on skin in a 'water basin.' He told the jury he used sheep blood, human hair and pig skin to perform tests on the skin blood stain. Photographs of his test were shown to the jury.

He testified there was one scenario his testing revealed that found Kendy's death was consistent with suicide.

Prosecutors questioned why, upon reviewing other findings of experts stating Kendy Howard was already dead when the shot was fired, he still found a scenario indicating suicide. Desmoulin pointed back to the original ruling of Dr. John Howard who found Kendy was killed by a gunshot wound.

Prosecutors questioned him about the blood, or lack of significant blood, in the bath water.

"There's very little blood in the water," prosecutors said.

"Nobody knows that," Desmoulin responded.

He further testified regarding the blood, that it "sinks in water and that that is indisputable."

He was the final witness for the defense. Howard will not be testifying in his own defense.

Dr. Smock, one of the state's expert witnesses, was their first and only rebuttal witness. He appeared via Zoom. He again testified that Kendy Howard had multiple injuries that were sustained prior to death, including bruising on her neck and other signs of asphyxia. He also again testified that her right forearm had a second-degree burn.

"Clearly, Mrs. Howard sustained a gunshot wound... but it's my opinion it was post mortem," Smock told the jury via Zoom.

He told the jury for a second time that he believes, based on all evidence he reviewed, Kendy Howard died as the result of being choked or strangled.

Are you 100 percent convinced this was a homicide, prosecutors asked.

"Yes sir, I am," Smock testified.



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