

**Drew Peterson Trial 2012 - Murder of Kathleen Savio  
People of the State of Illinois v. Drew Peterson (09CF-1048)  
Will County, Joliet, Illinois**

**Dr. Christopher Long Testified August 14, 2012**

**A Personal Collection of Found Materials ("as is")  
(Note: This is "not" an official legal court transcript)  
(Dialog spacing done below for format and reading ease)**

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In Session  
<https://www.facebook.com/InSession>

August 14

Testimony is set to begin shortly in the Drew Peterson murder trial.

In Session's Facebook will have live updates from court!

And don't miss our daily, in-depth coverage of the Peterson trial from 1 P.M. to 3 P.M. on In Session.

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In Session

According to prosecution PIO Chuck Pelkie, the first witness today will be forensic toxicologist Dr. Christopher Long.

August 14 at 10:08am · Like · 6

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In Session

According to media coordinator Kathy Hoffmeyer, people are coming earlier and earlier to line up for public seating. . . Hoffmeyer says that some of the regulars, who routinely arrive around 6:00 am, got edged out this morning by some newbies who arrived around 5:00.

August 14 at 10:15am · Like · 8

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In Session

August 14

Watch this thread for live updates from the Drew Peterson murder trial!

According to prosecution PIO Chuck Pelkie, the first witness today will be forensic toxicologist Dr. Christopher Long.

Judge Burmila is on the bench. He sends for the jurors.

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**08/14/2012: Prosecutor John Conner on direct examination**

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In Session

The jurors are now in the courtroom, and the State calls its first witness:

Christopher Long (questioned by prosecutor Connor).

“I work for St. Louis University School of Medicine...I direct the Toxicology Laboratory.”

He has two masters degrees and a doctorate in Toxicology.

“I’m a forensic toxicologist; we study the drugs and substances that people use and abuse, so that the manner of the data may be introduced into a court of law.”

He is board certified in forensic toxicology. He has a PhD, and is NOT a medical doctor.

August 14 at 10:24am · Like · 8

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In Session

Long says he routinely testifies in court.

“I testify in court somewhere between once and twice a month. In depositions, it’s more than that. And I’ve done that once or twice a month for probably the last 10 or 15 years.”

Whenever he’s testified, he’d been accepted as an expert witness (as he is again in this case).

In 2004, his lab studied tissue samples from Kathleen Savio’s body.

August 14 at 10:25am · Like · 11

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In Session

The witness identifies a copy of the air bill associated with the submission of Savio’s samples in 2004.

“We note the condition; we want the package sealed and undamaged when we receive it... and then we place it in refrigerated storage.”

The witness is then handed another document.

“This is the test request. When we receive samples, we need to know who it’s from, and some sort of background information, so we’ll have an idea of what to test for.”

“That is not prepared by your office, but it is maintained by your office?”

“Yes.”

August 14 at 10:28am · Like · 10

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In Session

The witness is handed yet another document.

“This is our work sheet. This shows basically what we received, the identification of the case . . . and a summation of our test results.”

“Is there a name attached to that case on that document?”

“Kathleen Savio . . . from March 4, 2004.”

He identifies the next document as “our toxicology report; it’s got my signature on the bottom. It shows the testing that we did, and it’s all negative . . . we do a shotgun approach as far as testing. First, we’ll test for alcohol and other volatile compounds . . . then we test for drugs, in a two prong approach. One prong is for amino acids, which has an allergic reaction in a test tube . . . part two is gas chromatography. If it comes up possible on the amino acids, it goes on for further testing. If it comes up positive on the chromatography, it may or may not go on, depending on what it tested positive for.”

“So the results reflected indicate that nothing was indicated present in the tissue of Kathleen Savio?”

“Well, it indicated positive for an opiate, and that was taken on for further testing. Then it tested negative in further testing . . . while the first test will allow anything in that’s close, the further test will define it, and say, ‘No, that’s not correct.’”

“So the second test eliminated the possibility of anything in Kathleen Savio’s system?”

“Yes.”

August 14 at 10:34am · Like · 11

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In Session

The tissue that was examined in his lab was from Savio’s liver.

“Why do you test the liver?”

“The drugs are concentrated in your liver . . . that is where you’ll find your greatest concentration for a drug.”

“Did you also perform testing on sample from Kathleen Savio’s tissues in 2007?”

“Yes, Sir.”

August 14 at 10:34am · Like · 6

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In Session

The witness is handed the airbill in which he received Savio’s tissue samples for the 2007 testing. The next two documents he identifies are the test request form, and then the letter from the coroner “telling us what he sent.”

Another document is “our work sheet, with a summation of the testing that had been done in 2007.”

The witness is now handed “our toxicology report, with my signature on the bottom . . . this was actually from November 13, 2007; we received it December 12, and it was sent out February 15 . . . there was a screening for methadone, and it came back negative . . . in decomposition, you get a lot of things coming through, so you have to be far more careful in doing the analysis . . . what happened in this case was the body was decomposed, and gave us a false positive . . . this is most likely an artifact in a decomposed liver.”

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August 14 at 10:39am · Like · 8

In Session

“Can you explain some of the chemistry about why there are issues with decomposed tissue?”

“Say you have hamburger in your refrigerator, and you leave it there too long . . . it didn’t smell before, but it does smell now. That’s due to decomposition . . . proteins break down, and generate cyanide and PPA . . . this is a decomposition product. And we’ll see anything that contains nitrogen, and it will jump up and bite us. When it’s fresh, you don’t have any of those compounds, which can only give false positives. With a decomposed tissue, you have to be more cautious, and make sure what you’re finding is truly present.”

“In this particular case, what would the false positive have been?”

“The three things we find in decomposed tissue are amphetamines, methadone...

August 14 at 10:43am · Like · 5

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#### In Session

Using a graph produced through the gas chromatography process, the witness attempts to explain the results of Kathleen Savio's toxicology testing.

"When we start the test, we put known substances in there, and we want to see them come out at the end; that's how we know that everything worked . . . as you can see, there's a very clean chromatogram . . . this one is from 2004."

Again, the witness insists that there was nothing present in the liver sample from Kathleen Savio's body in 2004. The witness is then handed the chromatogram from 2007.

"These are all decomposition . . . if you notice, a lot of the peaks here are very tiny . . . it's just decomposition; that's all it is."

"The decomposition of the tissue over three years caused some chemical breakdowns that are evident on that chromatogram?"

"Yes."

August 14 at 10:46am · Like · 7

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#### In Session

The witness is asked about a long list of compounds that are occasionally found during toxicology exams.

"Is it your testimony that these listed compounds were not contained in the liver tissue of Kathleen Savio in 2004?"

"Yes, Sir . . . because we do a shotgun approach on screening, we would pick up a lot of compounds, too much to put on a single page."

"But none of these compounds were present in the tissue of Kathleen Savio in 2004?"

"Yes, Sir, that's correct."

"And none of those compounds were present in the tissue of Kathleen Savio when examined in 2007?"

"That is correct."

"Had those compounds been present, they would have shown up in this report?"

“Yes.”

“So a negative result would not be listed?”

“That is correct.”

“Based on both these results, were there any anti-depressants contained in the tissue of Kathleen Savio?”

“No, Sir . . . not in any kind of concentration to produce any kind of effect.”  
Objection/Sustained.

“The tests that you ran in both 2004 and 2007, did those test for the presence of anti-depressant medications?”

“Yes.”

“And were they found in any kind of quantity that would cause a positive finding in the tests that you ran?”

“No, Sir.”

That ends the direct examination of this witness.

August 14 at 10:55am · Like · 8

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## **08/14/2012: Defense Attorney Darryl Goldberg on cross examination**

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In Session

After a long pause, the defense begins its cross-examination.

“You told the members of the jury that you’ve always been qualified as an expert?”

“As far as I know, yes, Sir.”

“Well, that’s not exactly true . . .” Objection.

The prosecution asks for a sidebar.

August 14 at 10:56am · Like · 12

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In Session

The sidebar ends.

Goldberg continues his cross.

“Would it refresh your recollection that I told you in [one] case ... you were specifically excluded as a witness . . . does that ring a bell?”

“No, Sir.”

“Well, that case involved tasers.”

“Oh, tasers . . . I’ve been qualified as a witness every time I’ve testified as an expert in toxicology. I’m not an expert in tasers . . . as a toxicologist, I’ve always been accepted. On something else, no.”

The witness then acknowledges that most of his testimony is done on behalf of the prosecution.

“You’ve worked as a consultant for the Kansas City Police Department?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“And the St. Louis Police Department?”

“Yes.”

“And the Illinois State Police, which is the investigating agency in this case you’re testifying in?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“And you reviewed police reports?”

“No, Sir.”

“Well, you’ve had conversations with Mr. Connor about this particular case?”

“Yes, Sir . . . to explain the test results, yes, Sir.”

August 14 at 11:01am · Like · 9

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In Session

“There’s a notation in your file where you note that Mr. Connor needed an explanation?”

“I don’t recall that . . . well, I can’t answer that yes or no.”

The defense asks for a moment to find the file in question.

The judge then asks that the witness and the jurors be removed from the courtroom.

August 14 at 11:01am · Like · 7

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In Session

The jurors and witness are now gone.

Judge: "OK, we'll take a minute. Let me know when you find the document."

The judge leaves the bench, and the trial is in a short recess.

August 14 at 11:01am · Like · 7

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In Session

The judge is back on the bench.

He sends for the witness and the jurors.

August 14 at 11:07am · Like · 5

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In Session

The witness and the jury are now back in the courtroom, and attorney Goldberg resumes his cross-examination.

He shows the witness a document, and asks him to review it.

"See that highlighted portion on the very bottom, 'Comment ASA' . . . doesn't that mean comment to the prosecutor as soon as possible?"

"No, Sir . . . it means [a chemical]."

The witness is then shown another document.

"You recognize this as a letter you prepared on or about June 18, 2010?"

"Yes, Sir."

"It's addressed to Mr. Connor?"

"Yes, Sir."

Goldberg reads the letter.



August 14 at 11:17am · Like · 8

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In Session

“You did, in fact, not do a single test in this case?”

“That’s correct; the staff did.”

“As a director of the lab, you sign your name to the reports?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“And you just made an assumption that the tests were done correctly?”

“Well, I don’t know that I’d call it an assumption, but I agree with you.”

“And you assume that the machinery was performing correctly?”

“Yes, Sir.”

August 14 at 11:18am · Like · 8

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In Session

A graph is projected for the jurors.

At the same time, the defendant is given a hard copy.

“This is a work sheet about what was tested, and the results of those tests?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“It suggests that liver tissue was tested in this case, and it was diluted four times before it was tested?”

“Yes..”

“And then it’s extracted to perform those tests?”

“Yes.”

“Based upon the gas chromatography test used in your lab that suggests the things that were there?”

“Suggests.”

The witness is then shown another document that lists several prescription medications.

“Zoloft is an anti-depressant medication?”

“Right.”

“So when you said there were no anti-depressants in the tissue you tested, that wasn’t exactly true, was it?”

“No, that is true . . . ‘suggests.’”

“You never did confirmatory testing to see if that was an accurate readout?”

“We did not do confirmatory testing.”

August 14 at 11:25am · Like · 8

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In Session

“Methadone is a powerful opiate?”

“Yes.”

“So you did a test to make sure it was not there?”

“Yes.”

“Lipitor is a drug that would not show up in your tests?”

“That’s correct.”

“The same thing goes for Celebrex?”

“That’s right . . . it could be there.”

“And Celebrex has side effects?”

“Yes.” Objection/Overruled.

“There have been lawsuits about the lethal effects of Celebrex?”

“I am not aware of that . . . I’m sure there have been lawsuits with every drug.”

“And a side effect of Lipitor can be muscle aches and pains?”

“Yes.”

“And Yasmin, the birth control drug, has side effects, too?”

“We did not have picked that up . . . and I may have misspoken about Celebrex; we may pick that up.”

“You have no exact knowledge of where the tissue for the 2007 testing came from?”

“From the liver.”

“But if it was sitting in embalming fluid in Ms. Savio’s fluid, it would be somewhat be preserved?”

“Yes.”

“Or in a jar of formaldehyde, at the coroner’s office, that would be preserved, too?”

“Yes.”

“But chemicals can leach out?”

“Yes.”

“So when you test things years later, you often get false positives?”

“It can happen . . . yes.”

August 14 at 11:30am · Like · 7

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In Session

The witness is shown a document, which he reads silently to himself.

“Is your memory now refreshed about the questions you were asked at that deposition?”

“Not really.”

“And you swore to tell the truth, just as you did today?”

“Yes.”

“And you were asked specifically about tissue that had been stored in embalming fluid?”

“Brain tissue . . . you get different results with brain than with liver.”

“But chemicals can leach out?”

“It can.”

“There are other compounds, such as herbs that are not picked up in your testing?”

“That is correct.”

“For example, you understand that many people take fat blaster pills?”

“I’ve heard of them.”

“If she told doctors she was taking fat blaster medications, that is something that wouldn’t be picked up by you?”

“It would depend on what it was . . . [but] probably not.”

That concludes the cross-examination of this witness.

August 14 at 11:37am · Like · 7

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### **08/14/2012: Prosecutor John Conner on redirect examination**

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In Session

Prosecutor Connor begins his redirect.

“You were asked a number of questions about embalming fluid. Was there any embalming fluid on the tissues that you tested in 2004?” Objection/Overruled.

“No, Sir, there wasn’t.”

“And when you did the 2007 testing, you were already aware of the 2004 results?”

“Oh, absolutely.”

August 14 at 11:37am · Like · 11

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In Session

The witness explains how some of his lab machinery works.

“It’s a very prolonged process . . . in doing the testing for aspirin, we know the decomposition will give us false positives. The 2004 was negative, in a fresh sample. So unless they started taking aspirin in the coffin, it ain’t gonna be there.”

The attorneys then approach for a sidebar.

August 14 at 11:39am · Like · 10

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In Session

The sidebar ends.

Once again, shown a document, the witness explains a notation to “ASA” on a report.

“It doesn’t refer to an Assistant State’s Attorney . . . it refers to our testing process.”

August 14 at 11:40am · Like · 8

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In Session

The witness defends the employees at his lab.

“Our people are certified by both the States of Missouri and Illinois. Each individual person is certified.”

He also notes that his lab equipment is easily worth more than \$1.5 million.

“This is a system of checks and balances; if one person makes a mistake, they don’t have the opportunity to correct it. Another person will catch it, and correct it. So there’s no way that people can cover up things.”

August 14 at 11:42am · Like · 12

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In Session

According to Long, “the test for salicylates goes back to probably before I was born.”

The witness then explains why there was not more testing for some substances in 2007, based on the fact that the 2044 testing had already been done.

“You have to interpret the results. Just because a computer kicks something out doesn’t make it real . . . we tested the samples in 2004; It’s not there at the beginning, it can’t be there at the end.”

August 14 at 11:43am · Like · 10

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In Session

“Can you explain how you ensure in the lab that the equipment is working properly?”

“We run standards and controls . . . all the data is reviewed, and re-reviewed, and re-reviewed.”

August 14 at 11:44am · Like · 9

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In Session

“How does decomposition account for your results?” Objection/Sustained.

August 14 at 11:45am · Like · 6

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### **08/14/2012: Defense Attorney Darryl Goldberg on recross examination**

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In Session

This ends the redirect, and Goldberg begins his recross.

The witness repeats that he had “a block” of liver tissue to work with in this case, which would help avoid the defense-alleged leaching problem in 2007.

“You like to be neutral an accurate?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“You didn’t do any of these tests?:”

“No.”

“So you don’t know who double-checked the machines and the data?”

“Well, I double-checked the data.”

“But you’re assuming the information that comes out of these machines is accurate?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Those tests, let’s talk about Xanax . . .”

“The closer she took it to death, the greater the possibility of detecting it.”

That ends the testimony of this witness, and he is excused.

August 14 at 11:52am · Like · 8

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