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Hamilton jury told of love, hate, death Stripper tells of dances; best friend details problems

Diana Baldwin Published: December 7, 2001 12:00 AM CDT

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Dr. John Baxter Hamilton loved his wife to death, District Attorney Wes Lane told an Oklahoma County jury Thursday.

"Someone said there is a fine line between love and hate, and that man crossed it," Lane said in his opening statement in the first-degree murder trial for Hamilton, an Oklahoma City gynecologist, obstetrician and abortionist.

He is accused of beating and choking to death his wife, Susan, 55, at their Quail Creek home on Valentine's Day. If convicted, he could be sentenced to life in prison with or without the possibility of parole.

Defense attorney Mack Martin told jurors in his opening statement, "John and Susan Hamilton were head over heels in love with each other.

"The evidence will be she was just as much in love with him."

Martin described the victim as being jealous of her husband's time away from her.

The defense claims Oklahoma City police jumped to the conclusion that Hamilton was the killer and ignored other evidence.

Hamilton, 53, was taken into custody just over an hour after he called 911, saying his wife was "hurt" and "bleeding all over the place." He was arrested and booked into jail about five hours later.

"The prosecution will present one theory," Martin said. "Anything else, they don't want you to hear.

"The police said, 'There's my man. Let's go find some experts to prove our case.' They will bring them in here. "

Prosecutors are counting on experts to testify that Susan Hamilton's blood and flesh were found in the defendant's 1996 Jaguar parked outside their home at 3056 Bush Creek Road.

Prosecutors said Hamilton changed clothes after killing his wife in the master bathroom. They claim the defendant took from the house his bloody clothes and the blunt instrument used to beat the victim after she was strangled with a man's necktie and her face repeatedly smashed into a tile floor.

Lane said a bloody imprint of what is believed to be the blunt instrument was discovered on the defendant's shirt. Measurements of the imprint match those of the holes in the victim's skull, the district attorney said.

Investigators never recovered the murder weapon.

Martin said Hamilton was hysterical when he found his wife, and after he called 911, he realized his car was blocking the driveway so he went to move it, getting his wife's blood and flesh inside the vehicle.

"He tried to get the key in the ignition, but he couldn't because he was shaking so much," Martin said.

Multi-directional blood spatters or spatters of blood coming from different directions reflecting movement were discovered on the defendant's shoes, but not on the slacks he was wearing, Lane said.

"There is a science to blood spatters," Lane said. "It tells a story. You'll hear that story."

The Hamiltons' 14-year marriage apparently had been in trouble for some time before the slaying.

Two months before her death, they fought over the defendant giving his son money without Susan Hamilton knowing about it.

Susan Hamilton suspected her husband was having an affair with a patient and stripper whose telephone number turned up 60 times on the defendant's cell phone bills.

Alliena Aguirre, a topless dancer for eight years, testified she had performed table dances at two Oklahoma City clubs for the doctor. She said he paid her \$100 and \$80 for the dances that cost \$20 each.

Aguirre, also known as Nina, said she first went to the defendant for an abortion in the early 1990s, but she also saw him at his gynecology office. She said he would give her samples of medication she needed for depression when she didn't have the money to buy prescription drugs.

She denied having an affair or any type of personal relationship with the defendant.

Aguirre said he was calling her 10 or more times a day. On Feb. 8, after the victim learned of the cell phone calls, the defendant wrote Aguirre in a letter saying he could no longer be her doctor, she said.

The dancer said Hamilton told her he loved his wife and didn't want to get a divorce.

Shary Coffey, Susan Hamilton's best friend for 37 years, testified the victim told her on Feb. 7 that she thought her husband was having an affair.

Susan Hamilton was angry and stayed at Coffey's house that night, Coffey said.

"She loved him," Coffey said her friend told her every day for a week before she was killed. "She didn't know if she could get the trust back."

Before Susan Hamilton died, Coffey said, the victim had changed her mind and thought that her husband was not having an affair.

Coffey testified that the defendant, also a friend, called her almost daily that last week, talking about the couple's problems.

"John said she had said something about divorce," Coffey said. "Susan never said that to me. John would have been devastated."

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