

The Truly Tawdry

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Okay, here's a confession. Almost every day at lunchtime I leave my desk, leave my office, and take my lunch into the TV room and turn on Court TV. Then for an hour I watch a little slice of the seamiest part of American life. Lately it has been the trial of Phil Spector, sleazy music mogul (see attached photos) accused of shooting would-be starlet Lana Clarkson.

This trial will end soon and it will be hard to say goodbye to this cast of characters. Yesterday, testifying for the defense, was a friend of the victim who thinks her pal committed suicide. She was apparently very depressed because a famous movie person (I missed the name) didn't recognize her, at a party. "She freaked out," said the witness.

All of the above took place at what the commentators refer to as "the mansion" belonging to Spector (again see photos), a 33-room house, the scene of many parties and much gun-waving.



The witness, and friend of the victim, was a hefty blonde whose profession was "doing clubs." Her name—I am not making this up—is Punkin Pie. I watched in a kind of grim fascination as lawyers in expensive suits and ties called her, politely, "Miss Pie."

There must have been a time when people like Phil Spector, now on trial for murder, and Lana Clarkson, now dead with a bullet through her head, and Punkin Pie, probably back doing clubs, were six years old and starting first grade. They probably had shiny new shoes, once, and a mom who brushed their hair, and a little lunchbox with a sandwich and some cookies inside. What happened between then and now? Where did things go wrong for them, and why? This is of course, the material of which fiction is made.

The jury will begin to deliberate Phil Spector's fate after Labor Day. Soon he will either go off to prison with a new haircut, or back to his 33-room mansion to party on. Public attention, including mine, will wane. Court TV will move on to its next tawdry tale, maybe the one they are already calling "Astronaut Love Triangle." I will sit with my sandwich once again and wonder what the heck caused these trainwrecks to occur.

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