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The View From Here

Carroll trial opening act is compelling

By Carl Strock

Yes, I did attend the opening of Jack Carroll's new trial at the Rensselaer County Courthouse yesterday, and I can't say it put me at ease.

Trish D'Angelis, the prosecutor, did a bang-up job in her opening statement of portraying Carroll as a conscienceless pedophile preying on a young girl who trusted him, with many a dramatic embellishment likely to impress a jury, while Carroll's lawyer, Mike Koenig, confined himself to a low-key warning to wait for the evidence, with no dramatic flourishes at all.

Ms. D'Angelis spoke for an hour and five minutes without notes and by the end of her performance I was practically ready to hang Jack Carroll myself, so compelling was she. She acted out various parts in the drama, speaking the lines of Carroll, the girl, the girl's mother and others, just as if she had been present during episodes that may or may not have occurred, and if I had to give an award for Best Opening Statement at a Trial, I would certainly give it to her, even though I know that certain elements of it were false and certain others highly doubtful. That's how impressed I was.

She's prosecuting Carroll on six felony counts of sex abuse, and so passionately sure is she, in front of the jury, of his guilt on all those counts that you would never suspect that just two days previously, on the eve of jury selection, she and her boss, Ken Bruno, offered to let him plead guilty to one little misdemeanor in order to avoid going to trial.

Carroll refused, insisting he will not plead guilty to something he didn't do, even though that would have ended the matter for him.

Ms. D'Angelis and Bruno earlier offered to let him plead guilty to a felony and get sentenced to the time he has already served -- which is two years, 11 months, and three days -- and of course he turned that down also, but anyway you can see that the DA's office does not have the resolution in private that it has in front of a jury but rather has been eager to get out of this miserable case and save what face it can.

Those offers, by the way, are supposed to be confidential, but I tell you about them anyway, because -- what the hey -- we're friends.

I will refrain from further commentary on the trial until we have some testimony.