PETERSON: In the mornings I've been taking the dog down to the park where she walked. It's like our time. Laci's and my time together. Knowing that she's missing but walking the dog through there like she would do on those mornings. It's like a way to experience her right now for me. A lot of times I...I can't make it very far. I get part of the way, I certainly can't make it to the part of the park where currently there is a big poster of her up.

SAWYER: (Voice Over) But Peterson knows at this moment police have focused their investigation on him. And when he arrived for the interview, before any tears, he said wanted to address the questions about the girlfriend and himself first.

SAWYER: I think everybody sitting at home wants the answer to the same question; did you murder your wife?

PETERSON: No, no I did not, and I had absolutely nothing to do with her disappearance and you use the word murder...uhm.. and right now every one's looking for a body and that is the hardest thing because that is not a possible resolution for us. And you used the word murder and yeah, I mean that is a....a possibility. Uhm..it's not one we're ready to accept and it creeps in my mind late at night and early in the morning and during the day all we can think about is the right resolution is to find her, well.

SAWYER: Did you ever hit her? Did you ever injure her?

PETERSON: No. No. My god no. Uhm...violence towards women is-is unapproachable. It is the most disgusting act to me. Uhm...and I know
that suspicion has turned to me and it's-it's uhm.. turned to me one because I'm her husband and that's a natural thing and uhm...I was.. I answer your question because the suspicion that's been turned to me. And it turned to me because of the inappropriate, romantic..uhm.. that I had with Amber Frey then.

SAWYER:  And yes he confirmed he did have the affair. Why were you doing it?

PETE RSON: I can't answer that I don't know. That's a..a... question you should have an answer to. Definitely I..I don't know.

SAWYER:  Were you in love with her?

PETE RSON: No. I'd have to say that I respect her, and as I imagine everyone does after seeing her come out and do the press conference, what an amazing character she has.

SAWYER:  Was this the first time? Are there others out there?

PETE RSON: No.

SAWYER:  There's no one else who can come forward?

PETE RSON: No. In our romantic relationship and that is...a, it's inappropriate, it was inappropriate and I owe a tremendous apology to-to everyone, obviously including Amber and her family and her friends and-and our families. It should have been-it should have been brought forth by me... immediately... the...the romantic relationship.

SAWYER:  Had you told anyone? Did you tell police?

PETE RSON: I told the police immediately.

SAWYER:  When?
PETE: That was uh the first night we were together with uh the police. I spent uhm.. with the police.

SAW: You told them about her?

PETE: Yeah, from December 24th on.

SAW: Did your wife find out about it?

PETE: I told my wife.

SAW: When?

PETE: In uhm.. early December.

SAW: Did it cause a rupture in the marriage?

PETE: It was not.. uhm.. a positive, obviously, it's a.... you know, inappropriate uhm.. but it was not something that we weren't.. uhm.. dealing with.

SAW: A lot of arguing?

PETE: No.. no.. uhm.. I you know I can't say that.. that even you know, she was okay with the idea, but uh it wasn't anything that would break us apart.

SAW: There wasn't a lot of anger?

PETE: No.

SAW: Do you really expect people to believe that an eight and a half month pregnant woman learns her husband has had an affair and is saintly and casual about it, accommodating, makes a peace with it?

PETE: Well, yeah, you don't know-no one knows our relationship but us. Uhm.. and that's... at peace with it, not happy about it.

SAW: Why did you tell her?

PETE: It was the right thing. There's no other reason than that.

SAW: Did you see her again after you told Laci?
PETE RSON: Yes.
SAWYER: You saw Amber again?
PETE RSON: I did.
SAWYER: But didn't tell her?
PETE RSON: But didn't tell Laci?
SAWYER: Didn't tell Amber?
PETE RSON: No. No. That was definitely not the right thing.
SAWYER: Because again you know that people sitting at home have imagined that either you were in love with someone else, therefore you decided to get rid of this entanglement, namely your wife and your child, or there was just an angry confrontation.
PETE RSON: Neither of those was the case. It's-it's that simple.
SAWYER: What about Laci's family?
PETE RSON: They're wonderful people. They're obviously...uhm... upset with me about the...uhm.. the romantic...uhm.. relationship with Amber. Uhm...and they have little trust, as they've expressed, in the media to date. Uhm...but I believe that they're still looking for Laci and I would like to work with them and I think it will, we'll..would be together on this effort to continue to look for Laci.

End of interview segment aired on Good Morning America on 1-28-03
PETESON: Driving along the highway for no reason I was just smiling. It was the biggest smile. And she asked me what the heck are you smiling about? The only thing was that she was there.

SAWYER: Tell me about the state of your marriage. What, what kind of marriage was it?

PETESON: God, I mean the first word that comes to mind is...you know, glorious. I mean we took care of each other very well. Uhm...she was amazing—is amazing.

SAWYER: You haven't mentioned your son.

PETESON: Hmm...that was—it's so hard.

SAWYER: He said since the day she disappeared it's been hard to go into the nursery.

PETESON: Can't go in there. The door is closed until there is someone to put in there.

SAWYER: Christmas Eve...

PETESON: Hmm...

SAWYER: ...you have a very pregnant wife and you decide to go fishing?

PETESON: Uh-huh.

SAWYER: What does that say about the two of you?

PETESON: Well...uhm.. we had plans that evening with mom...with Laci's mom, over at her house, cooking there as well. Uhm..my day was open to...uhm.. either play golf or fishing. I chose fishing that day.

SAWYER: What did you get her for Christmas?
PETE: Oh, a Louis Vuitton wallet.

SAW: And the last time you saw her was?

PET: I believe it was about 9:30 that morning. Uh, the reason being we started
to watch Martha Stewart Living while Laci was working in the kitchen
and...uhm.. I left sometime during that.

SAW: Are you on medication...

PET: No.

SAW: ...to get through this?

PET: Uhm.. I...I don't even take aspirin. Um, and I never have. Um, it-it's been
offered obviously, but I think that you need to experience it. As sad as
that is, you know all these emotions help us.

SAW: A neighbor said that the first thing that Laci did every morning was pull
open the curtains, but this morning they were never pulled open.

PET: Yeah, they were down when I returned. Uhm...it's very common in the
summer that she opens up the curtains. But again you know we're talking
about a day that, I don't know what it was probably forty degrees that day
or something and during the winter we don't open the curtains.. to keep
the house warm.

SAW: Did you load anything into a vehicle...anything large?

PET: Some umbrellas, some market umbrellas.

SAW: Market umbrellas?

PET: Those are those..uhm..you know the umbrellas on the stands that are, you
know, eight feet in diameter or something like that. Because it was
raining, put in the warehouse.
SAWYER: And what-when did you do that?

PETE RSON: That morning.

PETE RSON: We do have insurance policies on both of us in the same amount, two hundred and fifty thousand dollars on each of us. Uhm..they are an investment vehicle, I think they are termed whole life insurance or something. That we started when we bought a home two years ago.

PETE RSON: These are vehicles that both of us were in on a continuous basis. Uhm..I know for a fact there’ll be plenty of blood in there from me. You know I, I work on farms and you can take a look at my hands now and they have cuts all over them.

SAWYER: They do?

PETE RSON: Oh certainly. You can take a look at knuckles are always cut on me.

SAWYER: Been scraped any way.

PETE RSON: Oh certainly.

PETE RSON: It’s so in my gut reaction that she’s right there at home or I just want to be able to call her and tell her that see her tell her that.

LEE PETE RSON: You’ll see her again Scott.

End of Good Morning America Segment from 1-29-2003
PRIME TIME SPECIAL EDITION
Originally Aired 4-24-2003

SAWYER: I think everybody sitting at home wants the answer to the same question. Did you murder your wife?

PETERSON: No, no I did not, and I had absolutely nothing to do with her disappearance and you use the word murder and yeah, I mean that is a possibility. Uhm.. It's not one we're ready to accept and it creeps in my mind late at night and early in the morning and during the day all we can think about is the right resolution is to find her, well.

SAWYER: But as you know increasingly in the public, suspicion has turned on you.

PETERSON: Yes, definitely.

SAWYER: Did you ever hit her? Did you ever injure her?

PETERSON: No, no, my god no. Um, violence towards women is-is unapproachable. It is the most disgusting act to me. Uhm.. and I know that suspicion has turned to me. And its-its turned to me one because I am her husband and that's a natural thing. And I've heard all the statistics on all the news shows about that being, you know, someone that a husband, ex-husband, a boyfriend that is statistically one who would be responsible for her disappearance. And.. uhm.. I'm sorry I forgot your question.

SAWYER: Did you ever hit her? Did you ever injure her?

PETERSON: No, no, never. Um I.. I answer your question because of suspicion that's been turned to me and it turned to me because of the inappropriate, romantic.. uhm.. that I had with Amber Frey.

SAWYER: Amber Frey came forward...
PETERTON: I'm glad she did.

SAWYER: You are?

PETERTON: Definitely.

SAWYER: Why?

PETERTON: It's the appropriate thing to do. It really shows what a person of character she is. Uhm...and it allows us to...uhm...get back looking for Laci.

SAWYER: Did you tell her that you were not married?

PETERTON: I did. I did. Uhm...and then when Laci disappeared...uhm... I called her and admittedly it wasn't immediately. It was a couple of days after Laci's disappearance. I telephoned her and told her the truth.

SAWYER: The truth?

PETERTON: That I was married, that Laci had disappeared, she didn't know about it at that point. And then she contacted the police.

SAWYER: Were you in love with her?

PETERTON: No.

SAWYER: Was this the first time? Are there others out there?

PETERTON: No.

SAWYER: There's no one else who can come forward?

PETERTON: No. I owe a tremendous apology to-to everyone.

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SAWYER: A lot of arguing?

PETERSON: No, no, you know I can't say that-that even you know she was okay with the idea. But it wasn't anything that would break us apart.

SAWYER: There wasn't a lot of anger?

PETERSON: No.

SAWYER: Do you really expect people to believe that an eight and a half month pregnant woman learns her husband has had an affair and is saintly and casual about it, accommodating, makes a peace with it?

PETERSON: Well, yeah, you don't know, know one knows our relationship but us. And that's... at peace with it...not happy about it.

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of this entanglement, namely your wife and your child. Or there was just an angry confrontation.

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PETERSON: Yeah, they were down when I returned. Uhm...it's very common in the summer that she opened up the curtains. But again you know we're talking about a day that I don't, what it was, probably forty degrees that day or something. And during the winter we don't open the curtains to keep the house warm.

SAYWER: Nothing to that, nothing suspicious?

PETERSON: No, I mean um certainly I wish they...if something had happened to her in the house I wish they had been opened so someone may have been able to stop it, but in the winter who opens their curtains for the draft?

SAYWER: Another story that is out there is that the kitchen was spotless.

PETERSON: Uh-huh.

SAYWER: And in-fact there was still a wet mop around which indicated somebody had cleaned something very recently.
PETE: Laci was mopping the floors when I left that morning. Uhm...yes, the house is spotless she had a cleaning lady on Monday the twenty-third.

SAW: So, if the cleaning lady had been there why have, why have to clean again?

PETE: A dog, two cats, muddy back yard, she mopped those floors every day. And I emptied the bucket when I returned that afternoon.

SAW: Did you load anything into a vehicle, anything large?

PETE: Some umbrellas. Some market umbrellas. Those are those...uhm...you know the umbrellas on the stands that are you know eight feet in diameter or something like that.

SAW: When did you do that?

PETE: That morning.

SAW: I want to go back to a couple of other questions people have? I’ve heard so many people say... Christmas Eve, you have a very pregnant wife and you decide to go fishing?

PETE: Uh-huh.

SAW: What did that say about the two of you?

PETE: Well, uh, we had plans that evening with mom, with Laci’s mom over at her house, uhm, frankly Christmas preparations were done.

SAW: What had you got her for Christmas?

PETE: Oh...a Louis Vuitton wallet. Uhm, but preparations were made...uhm...her plan for the day was to prepare gingerbread cookies uhm my day was open to you know, play golf, or go fishing. I chose fishing that day which
was, you know, choice I made and I obviously regret now. If I just decided to stay home this wouldn’t have happened.

SAWYER: You haven’t mentioned your son.

PETerson: Hmm..that was...it’s so hard.

SAWYER: Tell me about the nursery.

PETerson: I can’t go in there. That door is closed until there’s someone to put in there. But it’s ready.

SAWYER: Are you afraid police will arrest you?

PETerson: No. I know there is-there’s no basis. I mean I had nothing to do with her disappearance. So there is no possible evidence or anything like that.

SAWYER: Have they given you reason to think this, that you’re their prime suspect?

PETerson: Uhm..yeah, I mean with, you know, the whole, you know, search warrants for the cars and things like that, certainly. Uhm, you know, a search warrant for the home...uhm.. and to get specific to a car obviously they’re-they’re looking at you know me.

End of interview segment.