# Constance Marten and Mark Gordon limit testimony in baby Victoria manslaughter trial



The ongoing trial of Constance Marten and her partner, Mark Gordon, has taken a dramatic turn as both defendants have opted to limit their testimony amidst serious charges surrounding the death of their newborn daughter, Victoria. At the Old Bailey, Gordon, who is representing himself after his legal counsel withdrew, abruptly declared he was discontinuing his testimony, asserting that he would only respond to questions deemed "relevant" to the case. His refusal to answer prosecutors' queries has raised concerns, with Judge Mark Lucraft KC cautioning that jurors might interpret his actions unfavourably.

Constance Marten, too, has faced scrutiny during cross-examination, openly expressing disdain towards the prosecution team — describing one prosecutor as a “diabolical” figure. The couple stand accused of gross negligence manslaughter following Victoria's tragic death, which the Crown asserts may have been the result of hypothermia or smothering during their time living in makeshift conditions. After evading authorities in the months following Victoria's birth, her body was discovered in a shopping bag in a delapidated allotment shed, sparking a nationwide outcry and leading to their arrest.

The prosecution has painted a grim picture of their actions, claiming that their decision to go "off-grid" was motivated by a desire to evade authorities, particularly following the removal of their four older children from their care. As such, the intense manhunt that ensued following the discovery of a placenta in a burning car was characterised as a catastrophic catalyst that led to a series of poor decisions. In his emotional testimony, Gordon lamented how the chase may have affected their judgement, positing that their situation could have drastically changed had they not been pursued by police.

Marten, for her part, has countered that the pressures resulting from her wealthy family’s disapproval, particularly towards Gordon, led them to mistrust authorities. This dynamic, she claims, drove them into hiding, as they believed that they were consistently tracked by private investigators hired by her family. She has vehemently denied any wrongdoing, stating in court, “I did nothing but show her love,” insisting that proper care was provided for Victoria despite their precarious living conditions.

The couple's past complicates their current situation. They were previously convicted of concealing their daughter’s birth and perverting the course of justice, following a tumultuous timeline that saw them travelling across England by taxi in a bid to evade capture. Their previous convictions have undoubtedly added a layer of complexity to the current proceedings, as the jurors must navigate the intricacies of their alleged negligence against a backdrop of family turmoil and societal shame.

As the trial progresses, the implications of these testimonies weigh heavily on the proceedings. The jury's task is not only to ascertain the facts surrounding Victoria's death but also to understand the motivations and mindset of the defendants during this harrowing ordeal. The retrial continues, with the prospect of further revelations that may shape the public's understanding of this deeply tragic case. It remains to be seen how the court will interpret the couple's actions and the broader societal issues at play in their desperate struggle to remain together as a family.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/constance-marten-mark-gordon-court-cross-examination-b2756709.html), [[2]](https://news.sky.com/story/constance-marten-and-partner-guilty-of-concealing-birth-of-child-and-perverting-course-of-justice-13158802)
* Paragraph 2 – [[3]](https://news.sky.com/story/constance-marten-and-partner-caused-entirely-avoidable-death-of-baby-daughter-court-hears-13325882), [[4]](https://news.sky.com/story/constance-marten-woman-on-trial-over-daughters-death-says-wealthy-family-saw-her-as-an-embarrassment-13363817)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://www.itv.com/news/meridian/2023-03-31/constance-marten-and-mark-gordon-face-trial-over-baby-girls-death), [[6]](https://www.bracknellnews.co.uk/news/national/24169109.constance-marten-denies-harming-baby-saying-i-nothing-but-show-love/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[7]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/constance-marten-trial-mark-gordon-baby-b2529718.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/constance-marten-mark-gordon-court-cross-examination-b2756709.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://news.sky.com/story/constance-marten-and-partner-guilty-of-concealing-birth-of-child-and-perverting-course-of-justice-13158802> - Constance Marten and her partner, Mark Gordon, were found guilty of concealing the birth of their child and perverting the course of justice. The couple faced charges following the death of their newborn daughter, Victoria. A nationwide search was launched after a placenta was found in a burning car in Greater Manchester in January 2023. The couple was arrested in Brighton in February 2023, and Victoria's body was discovered days later. The jury deliberated for over 72 hours before being discharged, and a retrial is scheduled for March next year.
3. <https://news.sky.com/story/constance-marten-and-partner-caused-entirely-avoidable-death-of-baby-daughter-court-hears-13325882> - In the retrial of Constance Marten and Mark Gordon, the court heard that the couple caused the 'entirely avoidable' death of their baby daughter, Victoria. The defendants are accused of manslaughter by gross negligence. The jury was informed that the couple kept the birth of their daughter a secret after their four older children were taken into care. On 5 January 2023, the defendants fled with the baby after their car caught fire on a motorway in Greater Manchester, traveling hundreds of miles across England in taxis.
4. <https://news.sky.com/story/constance-marten-woman-on-trial-over-daughters-death-says-wealthy-family-saw-her-as-an-embarrassment-13363817> - Constance Marten, on trial over the death of her daughter, claimed that her wealthy family viewed her as an 'embarrassment.' Marten and her partner, Mark Gordon, deny the gross negligence manslaughter of their daughter, Victoria. Marten testified that she and Gordon were pursued by private investigators hired by her family, leading them to move frequently to prevent authorities from taking their fifth child into care. She stated that her family was prejudiced against Gordon and disapproved of their relationship.
5. <https://www.itv.com/news/meridian/2023-03-31/constance-marten-and-mark-gordon-face-trial-over-baby-girls-death> - Constance Marten and Mark Gordon are facing trial at the Old Bailey over the death of their baby daughter, Victoria. The couple is charged with manslaughter after Victoria's body was found in Brighton on 1 March following a two-day search. The baby's remains were discovered in a plastic bag in a locked shed at an allotment in East Sussex. An initial post-mortem examination was unable to establish the cause of death, and tests are ongoing. The couple had been on the run for several weeks before their arrest.
6. <https://www.bracknellnews.co.uk/news/national/24169109.constance-marten-denies-harming-baby-saying-i-nothing-but-show-love/> - Constance Marten denied harming her newborn daughter, stating, 'I did nothing but show her love.' Marten and her partner, Mark Gordon, are on trial over the death of their baby, Victoria, who died after they lived off-grid in a tent on the South Downs in wintry conditions. Marten testified that she did not expose her baby to cold or allow her to get too hot and that she provided proper care. She expressed anger over the process her children had to go through and emphasized her love for them.
7. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/constance-marten-trial-mark-gordon-baby-b2529718.html> - Constance Marten has been accused of making 'fantastical' claims about 'Mission Impossible-style' private investigators trailing her and her partner, Mark Gordon. The court heard that the couple feared they were being tracked by investigators hired by Marten’s wealthy relatives as they went on the run with their newborn daughter, Victoria. Lead prosecutor Tom Little KC dismissed their concerns as 'fantastical,' concluding his closing speech by questioning the plausibility of such claims.