# Mark Gordon’s self-representation disrupts trial over newborn Victoria’s death with retrial looming



The trial of Constance Marten and Mark Gordon has taken a dramatic turn as both parents face serious charges relating to the tragic death of their newborn daughter, Victoria. Mark Gordon, representing himself after his legal team withdrew, abruptly halted his testimony at the Old Bailey, declaring he would only answer questions he deemed “relevant.” This decision was met with a stark warning from Judge Mark Lucraft KC, who informed the jury they might draw negative inferences from his refusal to continue. Gordon's statement came after he initially provided emotional testimony, insisting that the circumstances leading to their daughter’s death were beyond his circumstances and largely attributed to the police’s actions during a nationwide manhunt.

The couple stands accused of manslaughter by gross negligence and allowing their child to die, allegations that stem from events in early 2023 when they were found living 'off-grid' in a tent under harsh winter conditions. The prosecution has argued that Victoria either succumbed to hypothermia or was smothered while co-sleeping in an inadequate shelter. Disturbingly, the infant's decomposed remains were later discovered in a rubbish-filled shopping bag, a discovery that paints a haunting picture of neglect and desperation. As the jury deliberated, it was revealed that they struggled to reach a consensus, leading to the discharge of the previous jury and the prospect of a retrial, potentially slated for March 2025.

Marten’s account offers a different perspective, where she describes the heartbreaking incident as a “horrible accident,” claiming that her falling asleep was directly linked to her daughter’s death. Both she and Gordon maintain that they did everything possible to care for their child, expressing that they were motivated by a love that prompted them to evade authorities, fearing that their daughter would be taken into care, similar to their four other children. “To chase two parents who love their baby…” Gordon lamented, reflecting a sense of victimhood amid their dire circumstances.

Their ordeal is further complicated by their earlier conviction for concealing the birth of a child and perverting the course of justice, marking them as individuals already under scrutiny prior to the tragic death of Victoria. This history likely shapes both the jury's perceptions and the broader public's narrative surrounding this case. As the trial unfolds, the stark realities of mental health, societal pressures, and the failures of the state come to the forefront, prompting a deeper examination of what led these parents down such a devastating path.

In a society quick to judge, the complexities of the Marten-Gordon case challenge the boundaries of accountability and compassion, asking how far the system's failures contributed to the catastrophic outcome. The retrial will undoubtedly continue to draw attention, serving as a poignant reminder of the fragility of life and the tragic consequences of circumstances spiralling beyond control.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/constance-marten-mark-gordon-court-cross-examination-b2756709.html), [[2]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/constance-marten-mark-gordon-court-cross-examination-b2756709.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cq55x87nqnzo), [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cqee6p0enjno), [[6]](https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/crime/constance-marten-trial-verdict-jury-mark-gordon-b2565109.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-68931398), [[7]](https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/crime/constance-marten-trial-family-mark-gordon-news-b2513210.html)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## 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://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/constance-marten-mark-gordon-court-cross-examination-b2756709.html> - Mark Gordon, 50, representing himself in court after his barristers withdrew, refused to answer prosecution questions during the cross-examination at the Old Bailey. He declared he was 'discontinuing his testimony' after giving evidence in his own defense. Judge Mark Lucraft KC warned that jurors could draw inferences from his decision. This followed Constance Marten, 38, also refusing to complete her cross-examination, having called prosecutor Joel Smith KC 'diabolical' and a 'heartless human being'.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cq55x87nqnzo> - An Old Bailey jury was discharged in the case of Constance Marten and Mark Gordon after being unable to reach verdicts. The couple denied manslaughter by gross negligence of their newborn baby Victoria, whose body was found inside a shopping bag in a shed in Brighton on 1 March 2023. The jury deliberated for over 72 hours without reaching a consensus, leading to the discharge and potential for a retrial.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cqee6p0enjno> - Constance Marten and Mark Gordon have been found guilty of concealing the birth of a child and perverting the course of justice. The couple had faced charges including manslaughter by gross negligence, causing or allowing the death of a child, child cruelty, concealing the birth of a child, and perverting the course of justice. They had both pleaded not guilty to all the charges and will now face a retrial, possibly in March 2025, and will remain in custody.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-68931398> - Jurors in the trial of Constance Marten and Mark Gordon have retired to consider their verdicts. The couple both deny the manslaughter by gross negligence of their newborn daughter Victoria. Their baby's body was found in a Lidl bag in a Brighton shed on 1 March 2023. The trial has heard their arrests on 27 February last year came weeks after their car was found on fire on the M61 in Greater Manchester in January.
6. <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/crime/constance-marten-trial-verdict-jury-mark-gordon-b2565109.html> - A jury has failed to reach verdicts in the trial of aristocrat Constance Marten and her partner Mark Gordon over the death of their newborn baby. Marten, 37, and Gordon, 50, have been on trial for manslaughter since January after their daughter Victoria died the previous January while they were camping on the South Downs in wintry conditions. The couple denied charges of gross negligence manslaughter of Victoria and causing or allowing her death.
7. <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/crime/constance-marten-trial-family-mark-gordon-news-b2513210.html> - Constance Marten has insisted that what happened to her baby 'could’ve happened to anyone' as she described the newborn’s death as a 'horrible accident'. The mother told jurors it was her falling asleep that led to her daughter’s death. During cross-examination at the Old Bailey, she said: 'She died because I fell asleep.' She also refuted the notion that Victoria had died from hypothermia amid the wintry conditions of the tent the pair were living in.