

Nina Reiser's Best Friend Was Panicking: 'I Did Not Know Where Nina Was'

By *srlinuxx*

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Nina Reiser's best friend took the witness stand here Wednesday at Hans Reiser's murder trial, reliving for jurors her emotional disarray following her friend's disappearance last year. "I was panicking. I did not know where Nina was."

All the while, Hans Reiser, the developer of once popular Linux file systems, rested his elbow on the defense table and propped his head with his chin on palm, sometimes gazing at the witness who described his wife's final days before she went missing. Like a dozen witnesses before, Ellen Doren testified it was impossible Nina Reiser would abandon her children as Hans Reiser claims.

"Would she have been the kind of mother that would just vanish and abandon her children?" prosecutor Paul Hora asked in the midst of the trial's fifth week here. Her answer was nearly identical to the many others. "Absolutely not."

Doren recollected a telephone conversation with Hans Reiser's wife the day she vanished, Sept. 3, 2006. She described Nina and Hans fighting over who would have custody of their two young children that Labor Day weekend of Sept. 3, 2006. She also said she had plans to meet Nina Reiser for dinner later that evening.

"Was that the last time you ever talked to her?" prosecutor Paul Hora asked. "Did you ever talk to her again."

The witness shook her head no.

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