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Opening statements begin in Koulis murder trial

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FRANKLIN - The murder trial of a plastic surgeon accused of providing his girlfriend with drugs that led to an overdose death has begun in Franklin.

After a day of jury selection, attorneys in the case gave opening statements this morning in the case against Dr. Christ Koulis, who is charged with second-degree murder and reckless homicide in the death of Lesa Buchanan, 35.

It's a case that has drawn national media attention because of the charges, which come from a state law that allows prosecutors to charge a person providing illicit drugs with murder if the drugs cause a death. A crew from the television show 48 Hours is taping the case with two cameras in the courtroom.

Buchanan died on July 4, 2005, after police and emergency medical crews responded to her Cool Springs apartment, where Koulis had called 911. In a tape played for the jury, Koulis can be heard telling dispatchers that Buchanan was unresponsive and had stopped breathing. He attempted CPR.

Assistant District Attorney General Kim Helper told the jury that Koulis, who turns 40 tomorrow, injected Buchanan with a mix of Oxycodone and acetaminophen during a "marathon sex weekend." Helper said Buchanan had fresh "stick marks" around her groin. She told jurors that they would see videos the couple took of their sex acts and drug use.

Defense attorney David Raybin said there is no evidence that Koulis gave Buchanan drugs. He said it's a case of two adults using each other. He called Buchanan a drug addict and said she procured her own pharmaceuticals by "pill shopping and doctor shopping."

The trial is expected to last more than two weeks, according to the Williamson County Circuit Court Clerk's Office.