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Newly Released Allegations Reveal Husband Suspected Erin Patterson of Poisoning Before Fatal Mushroom Meal

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Freshly unsealed court documents have revealed that Simon Patterson, the estranged husband of Erin Patterson, had accused her of trying to poison him years before the 2023 mushroom lunch that killed three of his family members. The suppressed allegations, previously withheld from the jury during Erin Patterson's high-profile murder trial in Victoria, Australia, suggest a pattern of suspected poisoning that prosecutors had hoped to present as part of a broader narrative.

According to pre-trial evidence, Simon Patterson experienced multiple serious health incidents between 2021 and 2022, which he believed were the result of being poisoned

by food prepared by Erin. He reportedly documented his symptoms in detail using a spreadsheet and relayed his concerns to both family members and medical professionals. Despite inconclusive medical findings, Simon was convinced that Erin's cooking was the common factor in his repeated bouts of illness, which included a near-paralysis episode and the eventual loss of a significant portion of his bowel.

Court records show that Simon had voiced these suspicions to his father, Don Patterson, who, along with his wife Gail and her sister Heather Wilkinson, died after consuming a beef wellington during a lunch hosted by Erin on July 29, 2023, at her home in Leongatha. Heather's husband, Ian Wilkinson, survived but required an extended hospital stay. Simon, who had been invited, chose not to attend due to ongoing health concerns and his increasing distrust of Erin.

Though these claims formed a significant part of the pre-trial discussions, they were ruled inadmissible during Erin Patterson's Supreme Court trial. Her defense team argued that allowing the allegations into evidence would unfairly prejudice the jury. Prosecutors, however, pointed out several commonalities between the incidents, including the consistent absence of Erin's children from meals involved in the alleged poisonings.

A pivotal piece of physical evidence presented during the trial was Erin Patterson's disposal of a food dehydrator at a landfill site on August 2, 2023, four days after the fatal lunch. That dehydrator, found in an e-waste bin, contained traces of *Amanita phalloides*, commonly known as the death cap mushroom. Jurors saw both surveillance footage and transaction records confirming Patterson paid to discard the appliance. However, they were not informed that she had reportedly visited the same landfill earlier on the day of the lunch or that other items may have also been discarded.

The court also barred the jury from hearing about Erin's alleged involvement in caring for Simon during his illness, despite him suspecting she had caused it. While these details were considered during pre-trial proceedings, the Court of Appeal ultimately determined that all charges related to Simon, referred to as the "Simon charges," would be handled in a separate trial. Without public explanation, prosecutors dropped four attempted murder charges linked to Simon at the start of the murder trial involving the fatal mushroom meal.

Dr. Chris Ford, Simon's former general practitioner (GP), confirmed to police that poisoning had been considered as a possible explanation for Simon's recurring illnesses. Simon had also reportedly shared his concerns with his father Don, brother Matt, and a cousin in the lead-up to the tragic event. Despite these warnings, Don and Gail Patterson chose to attend the lunch.

During the investigation, detectives discovered Erin had online associations with individuals interested in true crime and had interacted with content related to toxic mushrooms. This included activity on the app iNaturalist, a platform where users document fungi sightings. This online footprint, along with digital records and personal communications, contributed to building the prosecution's case.

Erin Patterson, who pleaded not guilty, maintained throughout the trial that the incident was an accident and claimed she had used store-bought mushrooms in the meal. She suggested the possibility that toxic mushrooms could have been included unintentionally. Nevertheless, the jury deliberated for seven days before returning unanimous guilty verdicts for three counts of murder and two counts of attempted murder.

Sentencing is pending. Given the severity of the convictions, Patterson is expected to receive a life sentence.