

DETROIT: 'I STARTED STABBING HIM,' MAN TOLD COP - TRIAL HEARS STATEMENT ON DEATHS AT CHELI'S

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Justin Blackshear said he saw a knife in the kitchen of Cheli's Chili Bar, grabbed it, started running and then started stabbing.

That was the version he gave police as to what happened Jan. 2, and his words were relayed Tuesday in Wayne County Circuit Court during the first day of the trial in the killings of employees Megan Soroka, 49, and Mark Barnard, 52.

Blackshear, 17, a jilted busboy and dishwasher from the Detroit restaurant owned by Red Wing hockey player Chris Chelios, is charged with two counts of felony murder in connection with the stabbings.

Detroit Police Homicide Investigator Barbara Simon said she took Blackshear's statement - his last name is also spelled **Blackshere** in some documents - after police arrested him at a relative's home. She read the statement in court Tuesday.

In the statement, Blackshear said he went to Cheli's before it opened Jan. 2 to talk to General Manager David Starzyk about getting his job back.

Blackshear told Simon that Barnard told him to leave and pushed him and that Soroka told him to "get the hell out of here."

At one point, Blackshear said, he left the restaurant and came back in through a back door. He said Barnard shouted at him and walked away up a stairway.

That's when he said he saw the kitchen knife.

"I picked up the knife," Simon quoted Blackshear as she read his statement. "I ran up behind him and I started stabbing him."

Soroka then came on the scene.

"She said: 'What did you do?' and turned around. That's when I started stabbing her," Simon said Blackshear told her.

After the stabbings, police said, Blackshear stole about \$8,000 from an open safe on the restaurant's third floor. In his confession, Blackshear said he went to Cheli's simply to get his job back. Stealing the money - which police later recovered - was an afterthought, he said.

Earlier Tuesday, Starzyk testified that he hired Blackshear in April 2006 as a busboy for the restaurant, next to Comerica Park.

Starzyk said he fired Blackshear sometime later for substandard work. He said Blackshear begged for a second chance, and he was rehired.

Management was unhappy with Blackshear's performance and in November fired him a second time. Starzyk said Blackshear began calling the restaurant and showing up, asking for a third chance.

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