

MAN DENIES KILLING KIDS MURDER SUSPECT TESTIFIES GIRLFRIEND SLASHED CHILDREN, WOMAN

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In four bizarre hours of what he said was scripted testimony Thursday, a surly, sarcastic **Reco Jones** blamed a girlfriend for the slashing deaths of four young children and a former girlfriend.

On the final day of testimony in his two-week trial, Jones began answering his lawyer's questions in a confident, quiet voice, squarely facing the jury.

He said his longtime girlfriend, Maliaka Martin, killed the five people, leaving a death scene that even veteran homicide detectives said was the most disturbing they had ever seen.

The victims are Yolanda Bellamy, 24, her children Nathan Burns Jr., 5, and Nathan Burns III, 3, and her 3-year-old niece and 5-year-old nephew Shafontah and Delvontay Bellamy.

Jones said he was at the victims' Detroit home last summer when Martin began fighting with Yolanda Bellamy. He said he left as Martin was about to turn on the children with a knife, but admitted he then helped clean up the crime scene and destroy evidence.

Jones, 23, a former welder, said he didn't try to stop Martin.

"I didn't know what to do. I was just standing there," Jones stammered.

Asked why he later told another woman that he killed Yolanda Bellamy, Jones said the woman must have misheard him. While she thought she heard him say, "I eliminated her," he actually said "Kai eliminated her," Jones testified.

Kai is Martin's nickname.

But Jones' bravado waned under grueling cross-examination by Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor Kevin Simowski.

Simowski asked Jones about a cut police said they found on his hand after his arrest. "That's because the knife slipped when you were killing everyone? You cut your hand when you were stabbing everyone more than 100 times, right?"

Jones replied that he never had a cut on his hand.

As the inquiry continued, Jones snatched a piece of paper out of his shirt pocket. He referred to the paper as "the script."

"I've been acting this out all along. This script I had is just putting me farther in the hole."

About the day of the killings, Simowski asked: "Did you wake up at 4:45 a.m.?"

"I guess that's what I supposedly did -- that's what the paper said," Jones testified.

When Simowski asked if he told another woman that he killed Bellamy, Jones snapped: "I said, 'I eliminated her' -- I or Kai -- one of them."

A weary Jones also tried to exercise his Fifth Amendment right to remain silent.

"This is hard enough for everybody. I'll just take the Fifth."

At one point, a sobbing juror told the judge she needed to be excused, saying she couldn't listen to Jones' testimony because it reminded her of her son. She was ushered from the courtroom.

Simowski later said he was stunned by Jones' testimony.

Jones' lawyers said there was no script and that the paper Jones was holding simply stated facts.

Jones' lawyer, Kendall Siller, said his client's behavior was a ploy to get a mistrial.

Nathan Burns Sr., the father of Yolanda Bellamy's two children -- had another explanation for Jones' testimony.

"He was caught, he turned on himself, he's searching," the 23-year-old truck driver said.

Closing arguments are scheduled for today in the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice in Detroit.

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Caption: Photos by ANDREW JOHNSTON/Detroit Free Press

Left: **Reco Jones** describes the knife he says was used by someone else to kill five people.

Below: Virgil Sneed, left, consoles his brother, Nate Burns Sr., whose sons were among the victims, in court.

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Page: 1A

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