

MISTRIAL DECLARED IN SLAYING OF OFFICER SUSPECT IN BANDY CASE WILL FACE ANOTHER JURY

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A man police consider the mastermind of a 1998 kidnapping and extortion scheme that left one Detroit police officer dead remains innocent in the eyes of the law.

A mistrial was declared late Wednesday by Wayne County Circuit Judge Vonda Evans, after jurors remained deadlocked in the first-degree murder case of James Langford. The jury deliberated five days.

Langford, 25, is accused of killing Officer Shawn Bandy on Dec. 5, 1998. Langford has dodged prison in the past, having beat two first-degree murder charges. In one case, the charge was dismissed, in the other he was acquitted. In both cases, Langford's girlfriend, a key witness, disappeared before she was to testify.

"What scares me more than anything is that he could end up back on the street doing the same thing," said Susan Bandy, Bandy's mother.

Police said Langford planned the get-rich-quick scheme, where he and his friends would kidnap someone and demand ransom money from a family member. The plan backfired when police were called and spotted the van used in the kidnapping.

Police said Langford and four other men kidnapped a woman and her 12-year-old son for ransom money from the woman's boyfriend. Bandy, 25, was following the van when bullets came blazing from an assault rifle from its back window on a dark east-side street. Another officer, Lloyd Todd, was seriously wounded.

Bandy, the son of a retired Detroit Police investigator, was shot in the face.

Three Detroit men, D'Andre Coffee, 26; Thomas Culberth, 21; and **Montez Moore**, 27, were convicted of murder, assault with intent to murder, kidnapping, extortion and robbery. They were sentenced to life in prison last year. Langford won a separate trial.

A fifth man, who police say was present the night of the Bandy shooting, testified against the others. Eugene Childrey, 19, cut a deal with prosecutors and pleaded guilty to robbery and kidnapping and eventually faces 5 to 15 years in prison.

Now prosecutors must try to convince another jury that Langford, the son of a Detroit officer, should spend the rest of his life behind bars.

"It's disappointing -- we're back to where we started," said Kevin Simowski, Wayne County assistant prosecutor.

Langford will remain in the Wayne County Jail while awaiting a new trial.

Wayne County Circuit Judge George Crockett III was assigned the case because Evans recused herself. A new trial date will be set at a May 12 pretrial meeting

Langford's defense attorneys spent much of the 2-week trial attempting to convince jurors that police did not arrest the right killer.

Langford, along with **Moore** , fled to Erie, Pa., two days after the shooting. They barricaded themselves in a house with guns, but were eventually coaxed out by FBI negotiators.

Defense attorney Chokwe Lumumba said his client ran because he was innocent, but afraid of being sought as a cop killer. In addition, Langford's mother testified that she was told that 3,500 Detroit officers were ordered to find her son and shoot him on sight.

Emotional testimony came from Bandy's partner, Officer Jeffrey Bonner, who watched Bandy struggle for life in the police car. Officer Todd, who was shot in the eye, also testified from a wheelchair.

Langford has been arrested at least five times since 1992 and twice was charged with first-degree murder. He has been convicted twice for carrying a concealed weapon, though was not sent to prison. He was on probation for that offense when he was arrested for Bandy's murder. In March 1998, police arrested Langford in an armed robbery and homicide that ended with the death of Dwayne Traylor, 30. The case was dismissed after a key witness, Langford's girlfriend, failed to appear at the trial.

Prosecutors alleged at the time that Langford and another man kicked in the back door of Traylor's home on March 17, 1998, and demanded money and anything else they could carry.

Traylor's hands were tied behind his back and he was shot in the head and stomach.

Police alleged Langford tried to sell items that belonged to Traylor, such as monogrammed rings and a Rolex watch.

In 1992, prosecutors said Langford shot Paul LaMothe, 22, and Richard Mailloux, 21, during a botched robbery. Langford was acquitted of murder, after the same witness, his girlfriend who would have provided damaging testimony, disappeared.

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