

WITNESSES' STORIES CONFLICT IN OFF-DUTY OFFICER'S DEATH

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Witnesses in the slaying of off-duty Detroit police officer Gary Greer, killed in a shoot-out at an illegal drag race that left two other men dead, said Tuesday that he was shot while falling backward or while on his back.

However, testimony in Detroit 36th District Court did not offer a clear picture of the events leading up to the officer's shooting June 7. The first three eyewitnesses, who offered often-conflicting testimony, said they viewed different portions of the fight from varying vantage points.

One witness in the preliminary examination of **Johnny Ray Murray** said Greer was shot after he fired several times while wrestling with an unarmed man. The unarmed man, testified Wesley Fisher, got a gun and began shooting after breaking free from the gun-wielding Greer.

Two other witnesses, watching from elsewhere, offered differing accounts, one saying that Greer and his opponents pulled guns at the same time, and the other testifying that Greer was exchanging shots when he was fatally wounded.

MURRAY, 25, is charged with second-degree murder in the shooting of Greer, 36, on the Chrysler Freeway service drive near Holbrook, where several hundred spectators were watching illegal drag races.

He appeared Tuesday before Judge Longworth Quinn Jr.

Two of **Murray**'s companions, Derrick Pendleton and Keith Leatherwood, also were killed. Police reports indicate Greer killed Pendleton and Leatherwood in a struggle and was then killed himself after grappling with **Murray**.

Greer, according to assistant medical examiner Dr. Ian Hood, was shot four times -- in the chest, arm, knee and ankle.

Defense lawyer W. Otis Culpepper contends that **Murray** may have acted in self-defense after his companions were slain.

The examination, to determine if there is enough evidence to hold **Murray** for trial, was adjourned until today.

THE SHOOT-OUT began, according to police, when Greer, wearing civilian clothing, ordered **Murray** and his companions to move their car so a race could start.

Cheryl Williams, one of the witnesses, testified that heated words were exchanged and guns were pulled when Greer told the **Murray** group to move their car.

"I can't say who pulled a gun first," she said.

Fisher testified he turned after hearing gunshots and saw Greer, with a gun, and an unarmed man "tussling on top of a car." One or two shots were fired during the struggle, Fisher said.

The other man -- who Fisher said "favors a resemblance" to **Murray** -- broke free, ran around the car and returned with a gun, Fisher testified.

Greer tripped while backing up, Fisher testified, "and the other guy opened fire. He (Greer) fell and the other guy just opened fire."

Another witness, James Willingham, said Greer and another man, whom he could not identify, were "shooting back at each other" before the officer fell to one knee.

"He (Greer) fired back and then he was hit," Willingham testified.

As Greer fell on his back, the other man fired two or three more times, Willingham testified.

The other man then dragged two bodies into his car and drove off, Willingham said.

He said he identified **Murray** in a police lineup as someone who had been in the crowd at the drag race, but not as the gunman.

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