

WITNESS IN DEATH PENALTY TRIAL DESCRIBES BEATINGS , TORTURE - MAN ACCUSED OF HAVING HIS HALF-BROTHER KILLED

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A **witness** in the first federal **death penalty** case to go to **trial** in eastern Michigan **in** 61 years testified Friday how he was beaten and tortured by defendant John Bass and other gang members after they falsely accused him of pocketing \$2,400 **in** drug money.

"I was begging for them to stop and they just kept **beating** me," Joseph Chatman, 29, told jurors on the opening day of testimony. Chatman said Bass and the others shot him **in** the chest, doused him with alcohol and set him ablaze. They also burned him with an iron before taking him to a hospital for treatment **in** 1990. Before torching him, Chatman said Bass remarked: "Let's see what burning flesh smells like."

Under questioning from Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Leibson, Chatman said he carries scars on 40 percent of his body from the episode. Chatman said Bass threatened to hurt his brother if he ever told anyone about what had happened.

Bass, 34, of Detroit, showed no emotion during the testimony.

Bass, known as Bread, is accused of running a ring known as the Dog Pound that sold large quantities of crack cocaine **in** Detroit, Pontiac, Canton, Ohio, and Muncie, Ind., from 1989-1997. He also is accused of ordering the 1996 killing of his half-brother, Patrick (Ram) Webb, to gain control of Webb's drug operation and of killing the triggerman, Armenty (Fat Moe) Shelton, to conceal Bass' involvement.

Another **witness** , Carl (Pookie) Gooden, a former member of the Dog Pound, testified that he watched as Bass and another man shot Shelton to **death in** a car four days after Webb's slaying.

Defense lawyer Andrea Lyon tried to damage Gooden's credibility by pointing out that he had used several aliases, lied to police over the years and was given a lenient sentence **in** exchange for his testimony.

Gooden is serving a 140-month sentence for drug dealing **in** Ohio. By agreeing to testify, he avoided a possible life sentence.

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