

## **ST . AUBIN GUNMAN GUILTY BELL CONVICTED ON 6 COUNTS IN CRACK HOUSE MURDER TRIAL**

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Mark Bell, described as a methodical executioner who made an error of compassion by sparing a young woman, was convicted Tuesday of first-degree murder for his role as the main **gunman** in the April 4 mass slaying at a **St . Aubin** Street crack house.

Bell, 20, blinked several times and looked around the courtroom as the jury foreperson tolled the six victims' names and six times pronounced him **guilty** of first-degree felony murder.

After the verdict, an impassive Bell searched the faces of the jurors, but they kept their eyes averted as they filed past him and out of the courtroom.

Two other juries for codefendants in the **St . Aubin** murders, Tamara Marie Marshall, 18, and Jamal Latiff Biggs, 19, will resume their deliberations this morning.

Recorder's Court Judge Harvey Tennen rejected a defense motion to sequester the Marshall and Biggs juries to shield them from publicity about the Bell verdict.

The Bell panel deliberated a little more than 3 1/2 hours over two days after more than two weeks of testimony detailing the drug house robbery at 17850 **St . Aubin** . The robbery ended in Detroit's worst mass murder in nearly 20 years.

Tennen set an Oct. 29 sentencing date. Bell faces a mandatory term of life in prison without parole.

Bell faces another first-degree murder trial for his alleged role in a dope house robbery-slaying in March.

Wayne County assistant prosecutor Augustus Hutting said evidence showed Bell shot all five victims found in the upstairs of the cramped bungalow on **St . Aubin** .

Each of those victims -- Steve Owens, Bobby Frazier, Carl Williams, Robert Hill and Rodney Lewis -- was placed facedown on the floor and then shot in the head with a pistol almost touching the scalp.

In his arguments to the jury, Hutting said Bell was the executioner and helped supply the "control and intimidation" that allowed an experienced crack house crew "to be led like lambs to the slaughter."

A sixth man, Levon Robinson, was killed when he and a friend came to the house after the initial round of shooting. Hutting said that Bell and Biggs took Robinson to the basement, where Biggs shot him.

Despite the clockwork killings upstairs, Hutting argued, "Bell made a fatal mistake" by leaving a witness alive who could come to court and identify him.

That witness, identified by her nickname, Janet, because of the potential for retaliation, was Owens' 20-year-old girlfriend, who convinced Bell that she was only 14. Janet testified that Bell told she was too young to die, but warned her not to identify him.

Defense lawyer James Kincaid had argued that Janet, relishing the limelight, lied when she identified Bell.

"They got the wrong man," he said. "Janet wants to be the star, so she has to come up with something."

Kincaid said the verdict would be appealed.

A fourth defendant, Marc Caison, will be tried later.

Caption: Photo JOHN A. STANO

: Above: A friend comforts Zaneta Sanders on Tuesday after Mark Bell was convicted of murdering her son, Rodney Lewis, and five other people at a **St . Aubin** Street crack house April 4. Left: Bell listens to the jury pronounce him **guilty** on six counts of first-degree murder. He faces mandatory life in prison without parole. DATELINE: Trial; murder; **St . Aubin** ; Mark Bell; verdict

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