

## **BIGGS PROTESTS ST. AUBIN TRIAL, BUT GETS LIFE**

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Saturday, November 3, 1990

Author: JACK KRESNAK Free Press Staff Writer

Jamal Latiff Biggs -- the so-called "casual one" who lured a sixth victim to slaughter in a St. Aubin Street crack house -- complained at his sentencing Friday that he had been denied a fair trial.

But Biggs, who maintained that jurors were prejudiced by news coverage of the April 4 slayings of six people, expressed some remorse to members of the victims' families.

"I'd like to tell them that I'm sorry, but I didn't kill any of their family members and if I could've done anything to stop it, I would have," Biggs, 19, said just prior to being sentenced to life in prison without parole. "I've continuously prayed for them and my family and I wish that they would pray for me."

But the majority of Biggs' 10-minute statement to Recorder's Court Judge Harvey Tennen was a list of complaints that the judicial system had unfairly convicted him of murder because, he claimed, he had not shot anybody.

Biggs was convicted of one count of first-degree murder for shooting Levon Robinson, 18, in the head with a .357-Magnum revolver, and second-degree murder for his role in the shootings of the five other victims.

But Tennen told Biggs that "that jury gave you as fair a hearing as any jury in any court in the United States." He said, in his opinion, Biggs was as guilty as codefendants **Tamara Marshall**, 18, and Mark Bell, 20, because they planned to use guns to rob a house where drugs were used. Marshall and Bell earlier had been sentenced to life in prison without parole.

Tennen earlier had denied a motion by Biggs' attorney, Marc Lakin, for a new trial based on reports that one of the jurors had read a newspaper report about Bell's conviction two days before the Biggs verdict was decided.

Lakin and Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor Augustus Hutting said that the unidentified juror had testified in Tennen's judicial chambers shortly before the hearing that she had seen a Free Press headline announcing Bell's conviction at her home and in a newspaper box at the courthouse. She said her decision was not influenced by the headline, the attorneys said.

Tennen also refused Lakin's request to subpoena Free Press reporter Joe Swickard, who had asked Lakin about rumors that a juror had read newspaper articles on the case despite the judge's caution to avoid the news reports.

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Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

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Index Terms: COURT ; SENTENCE ; HOMICIDE ; MULTIPLE ; DRUG

Record Number: 9002110603

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