

MACOMB COUNTY: GIRL TESTIFIES SHE SAW MAN BEFORE KILLINGS - PROSECUTORS SAY CROUCHING PERSON WAS SUSPECT STAKING OUT VICTIMS' APARTMENT

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The **man** looked out of place beneath the overhang at Washington Elementary School. His knees were to his chest and his head burrowed between his knees, so the little **girl** couldn't see his face.

But **she** could see reddish-brown hair - the same color as on the Michael Myers Halloween mask found containing murder suspect Xavier Chase's DNA.

"I **saw** a **man** crouching beneath the overhang," said the 11-year-old **girl**, her voice meek, as **she** pointed to a spot in a photograph to show where **she** spotted the **man** as **she** and her father walked to a neighborhood general store on a Sunday morning last November.

Asked if that seemed unusual, the **girl** said yes.

The **girl**, whose name is being withheld by the Free Press because **she** is a minor, could be key in the murder trial against Chase because prosecutors say they believe **she saw** him staking out the Warren apartment building of ex-girlfriend Rema Reed and her new boyfriend, Terry Buchanan.

When the **girl** and her father walked back home minutes later, the **man** had disappeared. Soon after, they heard gunshots, the **girl** testified.

Reed, 32, and Buchanan, 36, were gunned down Nov. 4. Buchanan was shot once each in the head and chest; Reed was shot twice in the head.

Macomb County Medical Examiner Daniel Spitz said Buchanan suffered injuries from a "terminal collapse," meaning he'd been fatally shot, then fell to the ground without being able to protect himself. Buchanan's knees, nose and lips suffered abrasions.

The gunman likely shot Buchanan in the head while he already was dying on the ground, Spitz said.

Ester Barber, 73, began to weep as jurors **saw** photographs of her grandson's body from his autopsy. Her daughter - Buchanan's mother, Lillian Mitchell - rubbed Barber's back as the two quietly cried.

While Buchanan died at the scene, Reed was taken to a Detroit hospital, where **she** died after being placed on life support. Her father, Jim Reed, testified Thursday that **she** was afraid of Chase and that he'd told her **she** should take out a personal protection order against him.

Whether jurors also will hear about Reed and Chase's relationship from some of her friends is unclear. Macomb Circuit Judge Peter Maceroni said he would decide Tuesday if two witnesses - both of whom are expected to testify that Reed was afraid of Chase - will be allowed to take the stand.

Attorney Timothy Barkovic said that Chase maintains his innocence.

"They're trying to isolate 10 minutes in three people's lives and make a murder case," Barkovic said.

The case is set to continue at 8:30 a.m. today.

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo

CAPTION: Xavier Chase faces murder charges in the **killings** of his ex-girlfriend, Rema Reed, and her new boyfriend, Terry Buchanan.

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