

FIGURE IN DRUG GANG ACQUITTED IN KILLING

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Alleged Young Boys Inc. enforcer **Maurice** (Mohawk) **Gibbs** was acquitted Friday of second-degree murder in the May slaying of a fellow gang member.

A Recorder's Court jury deliberated an hour and 40 minutes, beginning Thursday afternoon, before returning with its verdict Friday morning, ending a 2 1/2-week trial before Judge George Crockett III.

Defense attorney Daniel Blank said the acquittal was a repudiation of the prosecution's "attempt to portray my client and me as evil persons . . . The verdict was a condemnation of this case."

The trial was marked by allegations that the key prosecution witness had been threatened and offered a \$1,000 bribe to help clear **Gibbs** .

Gibbs , 23, was accused of gunning down Joseph (Wamp) Brown the evening of May 12 as Brown, 22, stood near the corner of Benson and Concord. Brown was killed the day after he had testified on behalf of reputed Young Boys Inc. founder Raymond Peoples in a concealed weapons case in Detroit District Court. Young Boys is a reputed drug-distribution ring.

BEFORE DYING, Brown, who had been shot with two different guns, allegedly told several people -- including his fiancée, a friend and a police officer -- that he had been shot by "Mohawk and McGurk -- Kurt McGurk."

Kurt (Kurt McGurk) Napier is awaiting trial on a charge of first-degree murder for his alleged role in Brown's death.

Assistant Prosecutor Paul Bruno had characterized the killing as "a Young Boys Inc. case . . . this was a Young Boys Inc. dispute."

But Blank said the prosecution and police were intent on "framing a Young Boy. It didn't matter who did the shooting out there on the streets as long as they got a Young Boy to blame it on."

DURING THE TRIAL, Blank attacked the identification of **Gibbs** as Mohawk and Brown's supposed deathbed statement.

"In the first place, I doubt that it was made," Blank said of the dying declaration. "And secondly, how accurate could it have been, given that Brown was shot in the back?"

Although seven witnesses, including civilians and police officers, testified they knew **Gibbs** as Mohawk, four of **Gibbs** ' former high school classmates said his nickname was MoHart.

Gibbs , who could have been sentenced to life in prison if convicted, is serving a four-year federal prison sentence on a drug-related charge from an indictment a year ago of more than 40 Young Boys members and associates.

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