

## WITNESS BALKS

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A first-degree murder charge was dismissed Tuesday against reputed drug gang lieutenant Ragheed (Ray) Akrawi when a codefendant backed out of a deal to testify against him in the apparent revenge slaying of Adnan Jihad.

The last-minute refusal of Tim Jackson to take the stand against the man who was accused of hiring him to kill Jihad marked the second time the case against Akrawi has collapsed.

Charges were dismissed against Akrawi last month when the prosecution failed to present enough evidence to have him held over for trial.

Jackson and Thomas Harris told police that Akrawi, 21, hired them to kill Jihad to avenge the slaying of Akrawi's cousin, reputed drug boss **Harry Kalasho**. Jihad's son, Raed, is charged with killing **Kalasho**.

Testimony in federal court has identified Akrawi as one of **Kalasho**'s lieutenants in a drug ring.

The murder case against Akrawi was revived when Jackson agreed to testify in exchange for a second-degree murder conviction.

But in a brief appearance before Detroit 36th District Judge Daphne Means Curtis, assistant prosecutor James Metz said he was not able to present a case against Akrawi.

Jackson's refusal to testify means he still faces a first-degree murder charge, which carries a mandatory sentence of life in prison without parole upon conviction.

Akrawi is in federal custody under indictment on firearms violations.

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