

MURDER CASE JURY TAKES A BREAK

Failure to reach a quick verdict disappoints supporters on both sides.

St. Petersburg Times - St. Petersburg, Fla.
Author: COLLEEN JENKINS
Date: Jul 19, 2008
Start Page: B.3
Section: TAMPA BAY
Text Word Count: 407

Document Text

Attorneys presented two images of Joshua Rosa - one innocent, one sinister - in their last pitch Friday to the jury hearing his first-degree murder trial.

By night's end, jurors had given no indication which version they believed. After deliberating more than four hours, the panel requested a weekend recess, with instructions to return Monday morning to try again to reach a verdict.

Supporters for Rosa and 13-year-old Stephen Tomlinson, who died of strangulation on Dec. 8, 2005, in Carrollwood's Logan Gate Park, sat grimly when they learned that the wait for a verdict would drag on.

"This ain't good," whispered Stephen's father, Ron Tomlinson, as jurors left the courtroom at 7:45 p.m.

It had been a long week. Each day, family and friends of Rosa and Stephen packed the cavernous courtroom.

They always sat on opposite sides, a delicate balance of emotion and decorum. Crew members for In Session, formerly known as Court TV News, captured every moment of the proceedings.

During his closing argument, defense attorney Brian Gonzalez said prosecutors put the wrong man on trial. Rosa was a full-time community college student, part-time employee at Sports Authority and youth ministry leader at Zion Pentecostal Church.

He had been jogging that December evening, lost his keys and, as he searched for them, found the body of his young neighbor and acquaintance, Gonzalez said.

Rosa, then 19, tried to help Stephen, wiping his blood with a pair of white cotton gloves that he used for church activities, Gonzalez said.

A defense expert suggested that two people attacked Stephen, one strangling the teen from behind and another injuring his hip. The strangulation caused Stephen to bleed from the mouth and nose only after he died, said Dr. Ronald Wright, a private practitioner in Missouri.

That theory, Assistant State Attorney Jay Pruner said, made no sense.

Why? Because the defense had also argued that Rosa wiped blood from Stephen's face after finding him alive. The victim also had blood on one of his hands, indicating that he was already bleeding as he struggled with his assailant.

"It was not, unfortunately for Stephen Tomlinson, a quick death," Pruner said.

No one witnessed the killing or confessed to it, making the case against Rosa one of mostly circumstantial evidence.

Colleen Jenkins can be reached at cjenkins@sptimes.com or (813) 226-3337.

Credit: Times Staff Writer

Online News Archive

Find Old Newspaper Articles & Obituaries. Try It Out For Free!
www.HighBeam.com

The Fall

New hit movies when you want them Exclusives, Unrated, HD.
Free Trial
www.CinemaNow.com

Gucci: Official Site

View Our Timeless Fall Collection & Receive Free Shipping at
Gucci.com
Gucci.com

Branson Rentals

Week-long Summer 2008 vacations from \$329 total! Book online.
www.Wyndham-Vacations.com

Ads by Google

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.

Abstract (Document Summary)

Supporters for Rosa and 13-year-old Stephen Tomlinson, who died of strangulation on Dec. 8, 2005, in Carrollwood's Logan Gate Park, sat grimly when they learned that the wait for a verdict would drag on.

"This ain't good," whispered Stephen's father, Ron Tomlinson, as jurors left the courtroom at 7:45 p.m.

A defense expert suggested that two people attacked Stephen, one strangling the teen from behind and another injuring his hip. The strangulation caused Stephen to bleed from the mouth and nose only after he died, said Dr. Ronald Wright, a private practitioner in Missouri.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction or distribution is prohibited without permission.

Branson Rentals

Week-long Summer 2008 vacations from \$329 total! Book online.

www.Wyndham-Vacations.com

WV Fall Foliage Tours

WV in Full Fall Bloom! Enjoy Tours, Festivals-Request Free Travel Guide

www.WVTraditions.com

Ads by Google