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Case To Go To Jury Soon

Seagroves Says Intruders Scared Him

By Estes Thompson

(AP) — Michael Seagroves testified Tuesday he didn't shoot at four teen-agers he caught stealing his motorcycle and golf clubs until he felt threatened, then stopped firing when he felt safe.

Seagroves is charged with manslaughter and assault in the death of Jamal Elliott and the wounding of Clifton Taft Hester on March 18.

"I was just scared to death," Seagroves, 37, said. "I knew there was a bunch of people in my house. I knew I had to take action to keep these guys out of my kitchen. I knew my odds were better of being hurt or killed if they got in the house. My primary concern was for my son." Seagroves admits shooting at the teens, but said he didn't know how many shots he fired or whether anyone was hit. Prosecutors have contended Seagroves used too much force, relying on testimony that the victims were shot in the back as they fled. The defense maintains Seagroves was threatened and had a right to shoot.

His wife was at work and he was at home caring for his sick son, then 10-months old, when the break-in occurred.

The doorbell rang, but no one was at the front door, Seagroves said. On his way back to the bedroom, where his son was drinking a bottle, he heard a crash that shook the house, then the sound of voices in the garage, he said.

He got a .22-caliber rifle before opening the kitchen door into the garage. Inside were four men, two of whom ran out the open garage bay door. He said the other two started around his car to another door that had been kicked in, then reversed direction and came toward him. That's when Seagroves fired

his rifle, he said.

"I yelled stop or halt," he said. "They did not. They continued to run toward me. ... That's when I felt the most terrified, scared or frightened. ... They ran past an eight-foot-wide open door to get behind my car." Seagroves said he stopped firing as soon as he felt safe, then called police. Seagroves was quoted in a police statement as saying he went to the garage door and fired again, but on the witness stand Tuesday he said that wasn't true.

When he talked to Detective D.L. Dowdy, Seagroves said the officer told him: "Look, we're on your side. We're not out to get you." He

said as he drove to police headquarters with Dowdy, the detective "made the reference that if somebody had kicked your door in, I would have done the same thing." Earlier, one of the teens, Troy Evans, testified for Seagroves.

He said he and Elliott had participated in 13 or 14 break-ins before reaching Seagroves' house. He also testified that Elliott wasn't armed the day they went to Seagroves house, but that he once saw a sawed-off .22 rifle that was too large to fit in Elliott's bookbag, so he loaned a larger case for it.

Evans pleaded guilty in the break-in and served prison time because he had violated his

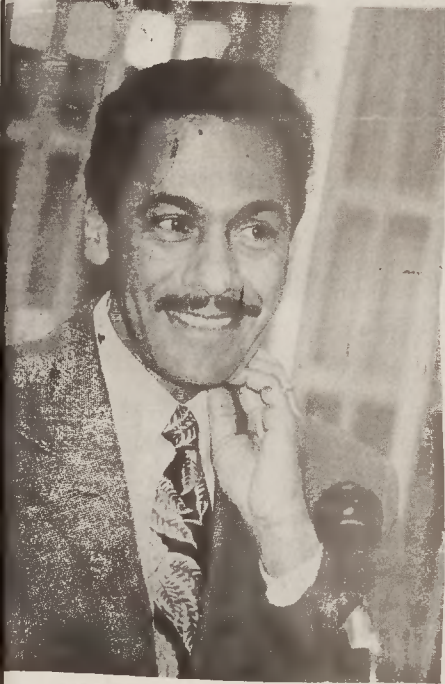
probation for five previous break-ins and an auto theft.

The jury was sent home early following Seagroves' testimony while lawyers argued over a psychiatrist called to testify for the defense.

Duke University psychiatrist Dr. John March, an expert on post traumatic stress disorder, said Seagroves' experience was traumatic.

"These are not life's daily hassles," March said during testimony to determine whether he could testify to the jury.

"These are the things that happen to the other guy" and involve terror and shock.



CONGRESSMAN MEL WATT

Town Meeting With Congressman Mel Watt Draws Diverse Audience

By Ray Trent

promised in his campaign, Congressman Mel Watt of North Carolina stays in personal touch with his constituency. When calls made to his Washington office, callers are surprised to find an answering the phone when he is in the office.

offices are established in Durham, Greensboro and Charlotte. He is also a mobile person who goes on a fixed basis — goes to places served by a permanent office to regular meetings.

Tuesday, December 7, Congressman Watt held the second town meeting in the Durham area at N.C. Mutual Cafeteria.

Watt welcomed to the diverse audience, Tom Stern, president of the Alliance, said that we should think of how Watt can deal with our concerns in Washington. He has a congressman who talks in your language, he said.

Hazel Rich said that it was a great pleasure to introduce Congressman Watt to the brightest new individuals on the Hill.

Watt said that he was proud of this year. The job was figuring out how to service a district that looks like the "first." It has worked out very well, he said.

In the first year's accomplishments, Watt mentioned passing of the Motor Voter Act, National Services Act, budget reconciliation bill, earned income credit, child immunization, crime zones and the Brady Bill. At year, Congressman Watt will deal with health care reform, crime prevention and crime reduction. He said that the present debate about crime is between those who want crime reduction and those who want more jails. The two have to come together, he said.

In the question and answer session, the chairman of the Durham Health Sub-committee, Howard Fitts, introduced a resolution on health care in that contains many things in proposed bill that might not be in the best interest of all.

A Sturdivant questioned the cost of a prison term. He said that care is a necessity for the aging people. The congressman said his agreement and work

toward resolving this concern.

Dabney Hopkins said she believes she is better represented than she has ever been in her life. She asked why Watt voted against NAFTA. He said he felt it shortchanged employers and employees and did not include retraining as he proposed.

Delores Rogers voiced her concern about children with guns in school being sent to detention centers at 6th grade level. She questioned the proposals that parents would be responsible for children's crimes. The congressman said he would not be supportive of this type of legislation.

Paul Miller asked about the status of the redistricting challenge. Watt said that there is going to be a trial of the case and, no matter the outcome, there will be appeals. He believes the district did exactly what it's supposed to do and feels positive about the outcome.

The town meeting was for everybody and many parts of the Durham community came. Conspicuously absent were the local media, and the only elected official from Durham City or Durham County present was Councilman Frank Hyman.

Congressman Watt's office in Durham is always open to the public. The congressman spent all day Wednesday, December 8, at the office for people to come in a talk with him and tell him what they want him to do as their congressman.

Weeks Before, Seagroves Helped Start Stalled Go-Kart

By Estes Thompson

(AP) — Weeks before he shot at four teen-agers he caught in his garage, Michael Seagroves apparently helped several of them get a stalled go-kart started, he testified.

Seagroves said Tuesday in his manslaughter and assault trial that several teens came to his house and said their go-kart they'd been riding needed gas. Earlier in the trial, his lawyer said the go-kart had been stolen from a nearby store.

Seagroves, a regional distributor for a small engine manufacturer, said the engine didn't have oil in it

and was jammed.

He took it apart, repaired it and sent the young men on their way.

One of the four who broke into the house testified last week a group had gotten help from Seagroves and saw the motorcycle.

But when he saw four men in his garage the morning of March 18, Seagroves testified, he didn't feel as friendly. He said he couldn't identify any of the youths, except that they were black and wore bulky coats.

Seagroves is charged with manslaughter and assault in the death of Jamal Elliott and the wounding of Clifton Taft Hester.



SOME LITTLE GUESTS "ham" their way in picture of the NCCU organization representatives who made the Christmas party possible.

Ms. Dacia Merle Is An African American

State Has Three Rhodes Scholars

By Sue Price Wilson

North Carolina colleges produced three of this year's 32 winners of prestigious Rhodes Scholarships for study at Oxford University, including two women pursuing very different goals.

"I had this impression of what a Rhodes Scholar is, and now it's me. I don't know if perhaps I'm a little disappointed. I thought they had higher standards," Dacia Merle Sampson Toll, a University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill senior, said with a laugh.

Toll wants to apply her Oxford studies in politics, philosophy and economics to America's inner cities. She's working on degrees in political science and economics.

Carolyn Frantz of Wake Forest University hopes to return to the classroom after completing

graduate studies in philosophy.

The other Rhodes Scholar from North Carolina this year is Alexander John Hartemink of Fort Myers, Fla., a Phi Beta Kappa and Dean's List student at Duke University who is getting degrees in economics, math and physics.

Toll is the 33rd scholar chosen from UNC-Chapel Hill since the Rhodes program began, and the 16th Morehead Scholar to become a Rhodes Scholar.

Toll, a native of Bethesda, Md., is vice president of the student body at UNC, a member of the campus's Black Student Movement who's been involved in the effort to build a new Black Cultural Center, and a former journalist for The Daily Tar Heel.

In addition to her academic achievements — membership in Phi Beta Kappa, the Golden Key National Honor Society and Phi Eta Sigma Toll is an activist in issues beyond the Chapel Hill campus.

"I'm often explaining 'Why are you trying to go into inner city communities?'" she said. "They're the issues I feel passionately about. As an aside, I also do a lot of math and science problems because I love to problem solve. And if you're a problem solver, the issues of the inner city pose some of the most intractable ones to tackle, but there's obviously more to it than that." Frantz, whose family lives in Lafayette, La., sees a future for herself inside a campus.



Town Meeting. (Photo by Trent)