

Jury selection

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hairdresser, a Winston-Salem State University student, a factory worker and an AT&T assemblyperson.

Presiding Judge Preston Cornelius sent the five jurors home at 10:15 Wednesday morning, asking them to return Thursday morning. Jury selection is expected to be completed by Wednesday afternoon with opening arguments beginning Thursday or Friday.

Much of Tuesday was spent hearing motions from the defense attorneys.

Cornelius denied most of the defense's 22 motions, including requests to let Hunt serve as his own co-counsel, to exclude the state's witnesses from the courtroom until they testify and to question each potential juror separately.

Cornelius also denied motions that would prohibit District Attorney Donald Tisdale from "death-qualifying" jurors by requiring that they support the

death penalty before they can serve, and requiring the district attorney to state his reasons for excusing potential black jurors with his peremptory strikes (the power given both the defense and the prosecution to dismiss 14 jurors apiece arbitrarily).

Because Tisdale is asking for the death penalty, the trial will consist of two phases if Hunt is found guilty. In the first phase, the jury will determine guilt or innocence. If Hunt is found guilty of first-degree murder, the same jury or a different jury will decide if Hunt's punishment will be life imprisonment or death.

Because Hunt is black and Sykes, the victim, was white, the defense attorneys and Alderman Larry Little, who heads the Darryl Hunt Defense Committee, object to an all-white jury. But, because blacks as a race tend to oppose the death penalty, said defense attorney Rabil while presenting one of his motions,

there is a possibility that blacks will not serve on the jury.

Tisdale objected, saying the defense didn't want a fair jury but a jury that was "racially partial."

But in order for the black community to see the Hunt trial as a form of justice, there cannot be an all-white jury, said Rabil.

"With an all-white jury it will be hard for our community to have respect for the opinion in this case," said Rabil.

Although Tisdale objected to the defense's motion that he list his reasons for disqualifying black jurors, three of the seven peremptory challenges he had used by Wednesday afternoon eliminated black jurors - two of whom supported the death penalty.

Of the eight black potential jurors that had been questioned as of lunchtime Wednesday, three were eliminated by Tisdale, two were excused because they knew Hunt and felt it would be difficult to be impartial, one was dismissed by the state because he opposed the death penalty, one was dismissed by the state because serving would impose an unjust hardship on him and one was dismissed because she said it would be difficult to find Hunt guilty of murder and even more difficult to impose the death penalty.

The defense had used six of its peremptory challenges at press time, none to excuse black people.

Approximately 40 potential jurors had been questioned by Wednesday afternoon. On Tuesday, 71 potential jurors appeared. Another pool was called in Wednesday morning.

Those dismissed included those who fiercely oppose and support the death penalty, a Baptist minister who believes that if a

person kills, he should also be killed, and a former client of Tisdale.

During the questioning of jurors Tuesday, Sykes' family, including her mother, Evelyn Jefferson, and husband, Douglas Sykes, sighed as Tisdale described the Sykes murder to potential jurors and one woman seated among the family members wept quietly.

The courtroom was packed on Tuesday, but the crowd was smaller on Wednesday. Because of tight security in the case, only a certain number of spectators will be allowed in the courtroom, said one of the sheriff's deputies manning the door. Many of the spectators participated in the "Darryl Hunt March for Justice" on Saturday.

The Hunt case marks the first time cameras have been permitted in a Forsyth County courtroom. The cameras, located at the back of the courtroom in a specially built booth, are not visible from the courtroom, and cannot focus on the jury.

Because of the pre-trial publicity, approximately a dozen media organizations are covering the case.

The state's potential list of witnesses includes Margaret Crawford, Hunt's former girlfriend; Pearl Mae Wilson, another of Hunt's former girlfriends; the mother and husband of the victim; Bryan Watts, the black man who found Sykes' body, and former associates of Hunt.

Tisdale said he intends to call approximately 27 witnesses.

A list of the defense witnesses included Hunt, Hunt's best friend Sammy Mitchell; Alderman Larry Little and Cynthia McKey, who has said Hunt was with her on the morning of the murder.

Taking

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Saturday-morning shoppers filed out of shops along Liberty Street to watch the parade of Hunt supporters march by. Passersby waved at friends and tooted horns in support. Bus riders put their destinations on hold to join in the march and curious bystanders wondered what was going on.

And, although fears that the Ku Klux Klan or some other group might confront the marchers proved to be unfounded, several cars containing white onlookers were parked along the parade path.

"We are sick and tired of being sick and tired," shouted Alderman Larry Womble during a sermon in front of the Hall of Justice. "This is Memorial Day weekend, but it's more. This weekend is not only for the veterans but it's a memorial for Darryl Hunt and all the other Darryl Hunts in this world. This is the Hall of Justice, but if the trial does not come out right, we will change the name of this building to the Hall of Injustice."

There were young and old among the predominantly black crowd that included some whites. Aldermen Larry Little and Larry Womble marched alongside residents from the Liberty-Patterson area. Jim Mack, a local consultant; Evelyn Terry, a Winston-Salem State University official; Herman Aldridge, head of the city's Human Relations Department; Patrick Hairston, president of the city's NAACP chapter, and the Rev. Carlton Eversley, pastor of Dellabrook Presbyterian Church, all donned their marching shoes.

Christians marched hand-in-hand with Muslims. The city's long-time civil rights fighters showed first-timers the way. Daddies held the hands of their children.

Alderman Larry Little, who organized the march, told the marchers beforehand that their actions did not endorse rape and murder. Little said the march symbolizes that the facts presented thus far in the case, as well as the physical evidence, do not indicate that Hunt committed the murder.

Little said it seems that public pressure to find the Sykes murderer is the reason Hunt is in jail.

"... I do not believe or feel ... that the police ought to look

around and find some black man with a record ... and charge him with this crime," said Little.

Or, as Khalid Griggs, head of the Institute for Islamic Involvement, said to the marchers before they left the church: "Just as it is Darryl Hunt today, it could be any of us tomorrow."

The marchers, some of them Hunt's friends and acquaintances, others representing various community organizations, expressed similar concerns. "I don't appreciate the way they are doing that boy," said Renee Brown, one of Hunt's friends. "I know Darryl. I knowed him since before his mother was killed. They shouldn't do him that way."

Said Lewis Pitts, one of the attorneys representing the plaintiffs in the Klan-Nazi civil suit: "The important thing here is to get a cross-section on the jury. Having an all-white jury is against our constitution. We are trying to continue in the effort to get justice."

Although the trip from the Hall of Justice back to Lloyd Presbyterian Church was not an organized march, the intensity hadn't waned.

"I'm more serious about this than I ever been 'bout anything in my life," said a woman who only introduced herself as a friend of Hunt. "I'll be at that trial everyday."

In other developments in the Hunt trial:

Reports have surfaced that District Attorney Donald Tisdale may indict Larry Little for harassing a potential witness in the Hunt case.

Little said Tisdale's actions represent those of a desperate man.

"They want to intimidate me," said Little. "They don't have a case, so now they figure they will go after me. But I ain't going nowhere. Tisdale is just mad at me."

According to Little, Tisdale said Little harassed James Johnson, a cab driver who has said that he gave Hunt a ride on the morning of the murder. No evidence has been found to indicate that that is true, said Little.

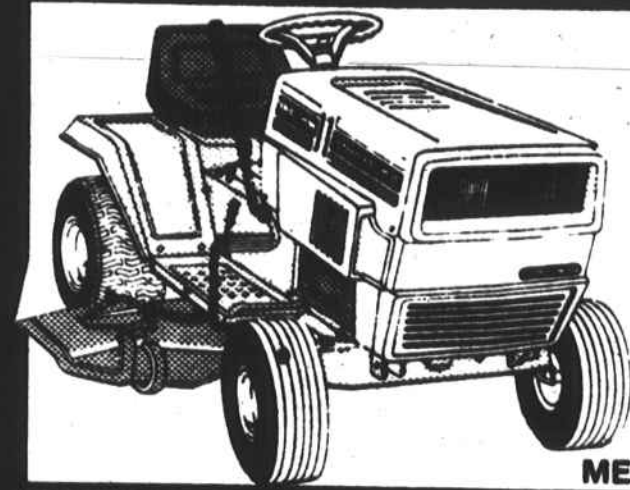
An employee at the Blue Bird Cab Co. in Winston-Salem said the company doesn't have a driver named James Johnson.

Tisdale could not be reached for comment.

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