

After A Week, 12 Jurors Seated In Bradley King Murder Trial

BY ERIC CARLSON

After a week of careful questioning by the prosecution and the defense, a twelfth juror was seated Tuesday afternoon in murder trial of Bradley Tyrone King.

The jury selection process was scheduled to continue Wednesday because attorneys need to choose three more jurors to serve as alternates.

Opening statements are expected to begin this morning (Thursday), according to Assistant District Attorney Lee Bollinger.

He will be joined by District Attorney Rex Gore in prosecuting the case against the 18-year-old Shallotte man accused of first-degree murder, kidnapping and armed robbery in the shooting death of Ronald Everett Evans, 20, of Ash last fall.

King was arrested along with William Earl Hill, 18, of Hale Swamp Road, after Evans' body was found next to a dirt road north of Shallotte. He had been reported

missing about a week earlier after failing to return from a trip from Ash to Shallotte, where he had gone buy dinner for his girlfriend.

Hill will be tried on the same charges at a later date.

About 50 potential jurors had been questioned Tuesday in a selection process that began July 13, Bollinger said. Most were dismissed because they said they could not impose the death penalty even if the evidence in the case indicated that capital punishment might be justified.

All but one of the 12 jurors is white, a situation that defense attorney Michael Ramos said he found troubling, but not surprising. In capital cases throughout North Carolina, potential black jurors have tended to indicate an unwillingness to impose the death penalty, Ramos said.

In a trial where a defendant might be found guilty of a crime for which the death penalty might be appropriate,

the state is obligated to dismiss any potential juror who says he or she cannot impose that sentence.

Although King and Hill are both black and Evans was white, investigators have insisted that the killing was not racially motivated. Police say they believe the two men shot Evans because he recognized one of them as they attempted to steal his car at gunpoint.

Superior Court Judge Orlando Hudson, who is black, will preside at the trial. Attorney Steve Yount will assist Ramos in defending King. Both lawyers are court-appointed.

Once the jury and alternates have been selected, Judge Hudson is expected to hear a defense motion asking him to prohibit the state from introducing into evidence a statement made by King to Brunswick County Sheriff's Detective Billy Hughes and an SBI agent after his Oct. 22 arrest.

In the statement, King allegedly admits being with

Hill on the night of Oct. 12 in a "goldish-brown, four-door Honda with a 30-day tag," the type of car Evans was driving that night. King allegedly told the officers that Hill drove down a dirt road past Freeman's Club on Mulberry street, where Hill stopped and "told someone to get out of the trunk."

King allegedly told the investigators that he saw Hill shoot a "white male" twice from behind with a handgun. At Hill's request, King allegedly said he helped drag the body to the side of the road before the two left and drove to South Carolina.

Hill has allegedly made a similar statement naming King as the person who shot Evans.

Both men could face the death penalty even if it is not determined who pulled the trigger. A person convicted of committing a felony—such as armed robbery—that results in a person's death can also be guilty of murder.

Shallotte Pondering Water Policy

BY DOUG RUTTER

Should Shallotte let Brunswick County provide water service to residences and businesses that may someday be part of the town?

That's a question Shallotte Aldermen couldn't answer Tuesday night when two requests came before the board for water service outside the town limits.

Board members postponed a vote, saying they need more information before deciding if they should allow potential customers to seek service from the county, which can provide water cheaper than the town.

"It's something that we're going to have to deal with, it looks like, on an ongoing basis," Mayor Sarah Tripp said of water requests from areas within one mile of the town boundaries.

Aldermen plan to settle the issue at their Aug. 3 meeting, perhaps sooner if a special meeting is called to deal with one of the more urgent requests.

In the meantime, Town Attorney Mark Lewis has been asked to gather the information board members need to make a decision. Specifically, aldermen want to know if they can prevent the county from selling water in Shallotte's extrajurisdiction (ETJ) without the town's permission.

Pending are two requests for water beyond the town limits. Under town policy, those people would have to pay higher tap-on fees and higher water rates than people who live inside the town.

Reggie Hucks wants water at a new dance studio being built off N.C. 179 near the south end of town. Residents in a section of Brierwood Estates that is outside the town also want water on their street.

Public Works Director Albert Hughes said Hucks would have to pay about \$2,500 in upfront fees for town water, plus double water rates. Hucks could get county water much cheaper.

Shallotte officials said they understand Hucks' preference for county water, but some said they need to look out for the town's best interests.

Tripp said if the town allows Brunswick County to serve everyone near Shallotte, there will be no enticement for property owners to become part of the town and pay taxes.

"My feelings are we either got to provide it (water) for them at our fees or let them get it from the county," Alderman Morris Hall said.

Other Business

In other business Tuesday, aldermen:

■Voted to spend \$1,200 to widen a section of Brierwood Road near the golf course clubhouse. Hall said the developers would widen another section of the road and add curbing at their cost.

■Approved a one-year taxi cab franchise for J.M. Warren following a public hearing. Shallotte recently awarded a taxi franchise to Johnnie Moody, also for one year.

■Amended the purchase order ordinance to require that department heads get approval of the town clerk and mayor before buying anything that costs more than \$100.

■Voted to send the town's land use plan update to the N.C. Division of Coastal Resources for its preliminary review. Town officials will hold a public hearing on the plan before final approval.

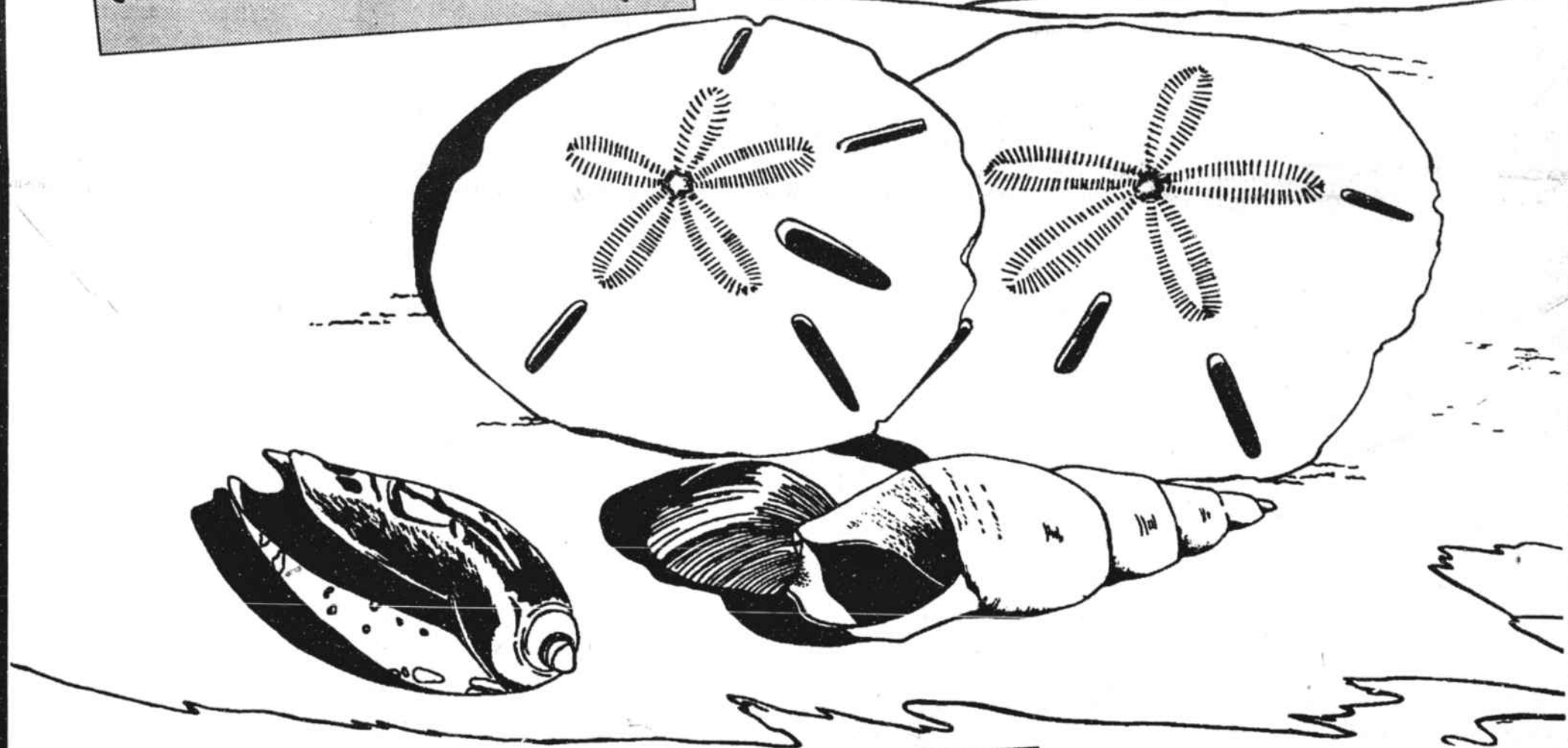
■Heard from Frank Niland, a resident of Brierwood, about his concerns regarding proposed development along N.C. 130 near the bypass. Niland said the town board needs to consider the cost and other consequences before allowing the development to occur.

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