

## Murder suspect Barney says: I didn't kill him

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Of The Register's Cedar Rapids Bureau

CEDAR RAPIDS, IA. — Accused murderer Willie Barney stared into the faces of a seven-man five-woman Linn County jury Friday and denied shooting Daniel Baker to death last Nov. 28.

"I did not shoot Danny Baker," Barney said. "Danny Baker was alive when I left that house . . . and that's the God's truth."

Barney, 40, is accused of shooting Baker in the back outside a residence on the southwest side of town. But Barney, a former janitor at the Johnson County Courthouse in Iowa City, claims he was in bed with a girlfriend when the shooting took place.

Defense attorney Larry Fugate of Iowa City is attempting to convince jurors another man at the house that night, Leonard Kase of Cedar Rapids, shot Baker.

The dead man has been portrayed by witnesses in the trial as a loud bully and Barney testified Baker had threatened to kill him the night of the shooting. He said an argument started over the Larry Holmes-Marvis Frazier boxing match, which took place three days earlier.

"(Baker) pointed his finger at me and said 'I got a pistol, I'll blow your . . . brains out,'" Barney told jurors.

He said he left the room, returned a few minutes later and Baker "started in on him again." Barney said he then left the house and didn't return the remainder of the evening. Baker followed close behind Barney, according to testimony.

"I said, 'Baker, don't follow me,'" Barney testified. "Then Baker said, 'I'm going to my car.' He was alive when I left there."

Other witnesses testified Barney walked back into the house shortly after leaving that night, but he denies that.

Assistant Linn County attorney Susan Weller is attempting to convince jurors Barney shot Baker in the back with a .32 caliber handgun.