

Claybon said he shot man, friend says

By JACK HOVELSON

Of The Register's Waterloo Bureau

WATERLOO, IA. — A 16-year-old Waterloo gang member testified Monday that minutes after the fatal shooting of Jeffrey Wood here March 11, the man accused of killing him, Daniel M. Claybon, said, "Man, I popped him."

Manzell Hughes, an admitted member of the "Black Gangster Disciples" gang whose testimony in Claybon's first-degree murder trial was given under immunity from prosecution, said he was one of seven young men who spotted Wood walking with his girlfriend and decided to jump him.

But Hughes said he and one of the others chose not to join in the attack because "I thought the dude was going to get shot." They went instead to a nearby store and bought two bags of potato chips, he said.

Wood, 24, died of a single shot from a .22-caliber revolver, which authorities said was fired by Claybon, 18. Hughes testified that the day after the shooting he told Claybon, "Man, you killed that dude," and Claybon replied, "I know, man. Don't tell nobody."

Hughes identified clothing worn by Claybon the night of the shooting, including a shirt bearing the words "Just Do It."

Wood was walking with Andrea Hurley about 9 p.m. when two men approached from the rear and began pushing him. Wood was backed up to a house where he was shot, Hurley testified last week. She and Wood were to have been married six weeks later.

Hughes testified that a week before the shooting, he and his fellow gang members jumped two men and beat them up as they walked alone on the city's west side. He said they attacked them "just for the fun of it."

In the intervening week, Black Hawk County Attorney Thomas Ferguson said, the group acquired the .22-caliber handgun.

FBI firearms expert Donald Riedman testified Monday that lab tests proved that the gun was the one used to kill Wood.

The bullet fired at Wood penetrated both of his lungs and his heart.

Before the encounter with Wood, "Maurice (Claybon) said he wouldn't mind popping someone with the gun," Hughes testified. Another member of the gang "was jumping around and saying, 'Let's get stupid,'" when the seven got out of their car to attack Wood, he said.

Hughes said Black Gangster Disciples gang members at one time met four or five times a week "to make money ... by selling drugs." He said he was initiated into the gang by "walking the line ... fighting six of those dudes (gang members) ... at the same time."

He said Claybon, wanting the gang to become known, advocated painting "BGD" on bricks and throwing them through windows. Claybon had recently moved to Waterloo after living in Mississippi, Chicago and Missouri.

Prosecution rests after witness testifies Waterloo teen fired gun

By JACK HOVELSON

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WATERLOO, IA. — The prosecution Thursday rested its case against an 18-year-old Waterloo youth accused of the March 11 shooting death of a man who was on a Sunday evening stroll with his fiancée.

Twenty witnesses, including one of three others charged in the slaying, testified against Daniel Claybon, the alleged triggerman in the unprovoked attack on 24-year-old Jeffrey Wood.

Claybon told police he knew nothing about the killing, but some of his companions in the incident testified that Claybon was there and that he fired the gun.

The defense will present its case today.

A seven-woman, five-man Black Hawk County District Court jury is expected to begin deliberating next week.

"I saw Maurice's (Claybon) hand come up and I saw him shoot the gun. ... I know I saw him shoot the gun," Richard Smith, 19, testified Thurs-

day.

Smith, Keith Walker, 18, and Harry Johnson, 18, all of Waterloo, also are charged with first-degree murder in the Wood shooting. Claybon is the first to go on trial. Three other young men were in a car with the four accused men, but they weren't charged.

Wood and Andrea Hurley were walking hand-in-hand on a quiet street in an upper class west-side neighborhood when the men in the car began stalking them, according to trial witnesses.

Wood, backed against a house by Claybon and Walker, was shot once with a small .22 caliber pistol that Walker had stolen that day from a Waterloo sporting goods store, according to witnesses called by prosecutors Thomas Ferguson and Raymond Walton.

The bullet went through both of Wood's lungs and his heart before lodging near a kidney. He died minutes later after staggering to the

rear of the house and collapsing on the lawn as his fiancée screamed for help.

Six of the seven youths in the car the night of the Wood shooting were members of the Black Gangster Disciples gang. Smith testified that he didn't join the gang because he didn't like the initiation ceremony — a beating by established members.

Claybon's lawyers, Brad Harris and Dean Olson of the Black Hawk County Public Defenders office, have sought to discredit testimony by the gang members by pointing out inconsistencies in statements they have given since the slaying.

Security in the courtroom has been stepped up for the trial. Spectators are being scanned by a metal detector before entering the room. The presiding judge, Joseph Keefe of Decorah, banned the wearing of clothing displaying obscenities after one spectator wore a shirt bearing some four-letter words.

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