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## **Attorneys detail prison officer's fatal injuries**

Tomoka inmates' murder trial may finish today

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DAYTONA BEACH -- Jurors passed around the prison-made knife that was fatally thrust into a corrections officer -- and heard testimony about her injuries -- as the murder trial of an inmate already serving two life sentences moved toward its conclusion Thursday.

Medical Examiner Dr. Predrag Bulic told the jury in the first-degree murder trial of inmate Enoch Hall that Corrections Officer Donna Fitzgerald would have been "gasping for air" after both lungs were punctured with the sharpened weapon.

Fitzgerald, a 14-year veteran of the Department of Corrections, was killed in a work area of Tomoka Correctional Institution on June 25, 2008.

Earlier this week, prosecutor Leah Case told the jury the evidence would show that Hall "laid in wait" after his shift had ended in a work program at the prison. "Using the element of surprise, he beat and stabbed her over and over and over again," Case said.

The first of 15 stab wounds Fitzgerald suffered were defensive wounds to her arms, seven of them, according to Bulic's testimony.

Fitzgerald was then stabbed in the stomach with the pointed 8-inch blade. She was still standing -- and turned away from her attacker -- when the weapon was plunged into her back several times.

Fitzgerald would have lived for three to six minutes after suffering the most damaging of the fatal injuries, prosecutors said.

If he is convicted of premeditated first-degree murder, State Attorney R.J. Larizza and Case will seek the death penalty for Hall, who is already serving life for kidnapping and rape.

According to a statement Hall gave investigators, he was trying to find pills "to get high" when he was interrupted by Fitzgerald, who grabbed him by the arm. "I freaked out," Hall confessed.

After prosecutors presented all of their evidence, Assistant Public Defenders Jim Valerino and Matt Phillips asked Circuit Judge J. David Walsh to allow them to present testimony from a clinical pharmacologist.

The expert, they said, would testify that Hall could have been influenced by seizure medications that were found in the work area.

After hearing argument from Larizza, Walsh ruled in prosecutors' favor and did not allow the testimony.

As was his right, Hall opted not to testify in his own defense. His attorneys argued prosecutors did not prove the killing of Fitzgerald was premeditated, but Walsh denied their request for Hall to be found guilty of second-degree murder.

Apparently to prove all was not right with Hall that day, the defense played a one-hour video showing Hall after Fitzgerald's body was found. With hands and feet shackled, the inmate in a blue prison uniform appeared rocking back and forth, sometimes bowing his head forward.

"I just wanted to get high, I just wanted to get high, I just wanted to get high," he said, repeating the phrase more than a dozen times.

Closing arguments begin at 8:30 a.m. today, with the jury expected to begin deliberations before lunch. If Hall is convicted as charged, the jury will reconvene for a penalty phase next week.

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