

McKeithen: Williams was there

Bay County sheriff says defendant confessed to being at victims' home at time of quad killings

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[By DAVID ANGIER / News Herald Writer](#)

MARIANNA — Bay County Sheriff Frank McKeithen told jurors in Jackson County on Tuesday that murder defendant Wesley Williams confessed he was in Danielle Baker's home when she was killed.

"He said he didn't do it," McKeithen said about an interview he had with Williams in January 2008. "He said he was present, he knew who did it, and he could prove it."

McKeithen said he asked Williams if revealing everything would clear him.

"He said it would be according to how you look at it," McKeithen said. Williams, he said, believed he would not be charged with "the main charge."

Bay County Sheriff's Office Lt. Joe Smiley said he was present for the admission, but neither man recorded the conversation.

Williams, 25, is accused of killing Baker, 19, and Amad, 3, Amarion, 1, and Aaron, 3 weeks. Baker was shot to death inside her Cottondale Village apartment on March 17, 2005. The three boys suffocated after being bound with duct tape. Williams, who fathered two of the boys, is charged with four counts of first-degree murder and three counts of aggravated child abuse and faces the death penalty if convicted as charged. His trial began last week.

Deputy Public Defender Walter Smith, told jurors that Williams had nothing whatsoever to do with the killings. Prosecutor Larry Basford said the killing was done so Williams could avoid paying Baker child support.

Basford concluded his case Tuesday morning and rested after lunch.

His last witness was local Medical Examiner Dr. Michael Hunter who, working off Dr. William Siebert's autopsy notes, told jurors that Baker was killed with a single gunshot to the head and the three children were smothered by the tape.

Hunter said the downward angle of the wound, and the gun being 2 inches to 2 feet from Baker's head when it discharged, indicates the killer was probably standing over her when the shot was fired. Baker was found slumped over with her back against her kitchen cabinets. She probably was killed while sitting or standing where she was found.

Hunter said her injury was devastating and she would have been unconscious immediately, even if her heart continued to beat. The children, he said, were probably unconscious within a minute of their airways being taped over and died a few minutes later.

Hunter said two of the children showed signs of chemical burns to their skin, but he believed this came after they died. Siebert noted in his report the smell of bleach in the bathroom where the children's bodies were found. Basford said the bleach probably was used to destroy evidence.

The defense

Smith began his defense Tuesday afternoon, calling Maurice Jones to the stand. Jones said he went with Perry Johnson, a man who spent time with Baker the night before her death, to Miami so Johnson could obtain a kilogram of cocaine. Jones said his understanding was the cocaine was "fronted," or given to Johnson with the understanding he would pay for it later.

"I just know it was a front thing," Jones said of the transaction. "He owed the dude some money."

One of Smith's defenses is Baker and her children were killed by the drug suppliers as they were searching for Johnson to get their money.

Basford asked Jones if any of Johnson's friends would think to go to Baker's residence in search of Johnson, considering the two were just beginning a relationship. Jones, who seemed to get angrier the longer the questioning went on, said he didn't know Baker or her relationship with Johnson.

Candy Zuleger, lab manager for Trinity DNA Solutions in Milton, told jurors about tests she ran on glove fragments found on the tape used to bind Amarion. She said she found two minor DNA signatures on the fragments, neither one of them Williams'. However, she said, because Williams shares much of his DNA profile with Amarion, his son, she was not able to rule him out as a contributor to the genetic material found on the glove.

Zuleger said the genetic material she found all came from males.

"So, two males contributed DNA material to those glove fragments other than Amarion Baker?" Smith asked.

"That's what it looks like," she said.