

Jury selection in Flagler double-murder trial begins

By FRANK FERNANDEZ, Staff writer

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William Gregory, right, sitting with his attorney Garry Wood, eyes potential jurors during jury selection for his murder trial at the Kim C. Hammond Justice Center in Bunnell on Monday. N-J | David Massey

BUNNELL -- William Gregory spent lots of time on Monday in circuit court looking at the potential jurors who could decide whether to recommend he be put to death.

Gregory, 27, gazed so much at the people who might decide whether he is guilty of the shotgun slayings of Skyler Meekins and her boyfriend Daniel Dyer that it became a brief issue for the court.

Jury selection will continue today in Gregory's trial on two counts of first-degree murder in the killings of Meekins and Dyer near Flagler Beach. Gregory also is charged with burglary while armed with a firearm and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

Meekins, 17, was the mother of Gregory's daughter, Kyla, who is now 4 years old. But Meekins had broken off her relationship with Gregory and started dating Dyer, 22.

Investigators say Gregory slipped into Meekins' grandparent's house near Flagler Beach on Aug. 21, 2007, armed himself with a shotgun he took from a closet in the home and used it to kill the couple as they slept.

About 60 potential jurors were summoned to Circuit Judge Kim C. Hammond's courtroom to answer questions about their backgrounds and their views on the death penalty. By the end of the day, at least a dozen had been dismissed for various reasons, such as being against the death penalty or knowing the Meekins family or being inclined to find Gregory guilty based on newspaper articles they had read.

As a group of potential jurors walked to the jury box, Gregory and his defense attorney, Garry Wood, would stand as is customary. Gregory, dressed in dark pants and a white shirt with a dark tie, looked pasty and a little heavier than when he was arrested. He gazed at the potential jurors and at times nodded slightly toward them.

And Gregory often turned around in his seat to look back at the prospective jurors in the courtroom. He turned so much that a deputy told him to stop. Deputies often tell defendants at hearings not to turn around.

Just before lunch, Gregory's lawyer asked Hammond to allow Gregory to look freely at jurors.

"Mr. Gregory is certainly entitled to view the jurors," Wood said. "He is entitled to give me input about the jurors."

Wood also said that if deputies approached Gregory too much, it would prejudice the jurors against Gregory and he would ask for a mistrial.

Prosecutor Chris France said the deputies were merely doing their jobs and making sure the courtroom was secure.

After lunch, Hammond announced that the issue had been resolved, essentially saying the deputies had to keep the courtroom secure but that Gregory was free to look within limits.

Gregory then continued to swivel back in his chair to look at the people who will decide his fate.

Jury selection continues today.

Special report: [Flagler Double Murder](#)