



GUILTY!

Stephen Crews
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It took eight men and five women less than an hour Thursday afternoon to find Richard J. Jenkins guilty of capital murder in the death of Willie Mike Brown. The decision provided a sigh of relief for law enforcement officials, the District Attorney's office and most importantly the family of Mike Brown after over two years of waiting for the case to go to trial.

While defense attorneys Phil Eldridge and David Harrison laid out a solid case for the possibility of someone other than Jenkins committing the crime, the District Attorney's office hammered home the testimonies of Dennis Paul, Butch Shenefield, Janice Shenefield, Jessica Shenefield and Rebecca Morgan who all testified that they witnessed Jenkins leaving the scene of the accident just a short time after hearing the sounds of what appeared to be an automobile accident.

"I had no doubt that Richard Jenkins was our man," said Geneva County District Attorney Kirke Adams following the jurors decision. "Sometimes I feel like it is better for someone to have to spend the rest of their lives in prison rather than face the electric chair," said Adams when questioned about why the District Attorney's office made the decision to remove the death penalty from the table as court began on Monday morning.

Adams went on to say that he believes the death

David Harrison spent a lot of time ripping our law enforcement officials this week and they did everything they possibly could tracking down any and all leads in this case.

Kirke Adams
District Attorney

penalty should be reserved for the worst of the worst crimes. He does not see this as one of those types of cases. He also stated that he consulted with the family of Mike Brown and that they didn't believe in the death penalty for this case either.

Defense attorneys Eldridge and Harrison provided a defense that Jenkins did not kill Brown and that the District Attorney's office had the wrong man. "I'm disappointed with the outcome of this case," said Eldridge. I am sure that we will appeal this decision immediately."

While the defense laid out a case that someone else committed the crime, the key suspect, Jenkins, did not testify on his own behalf. The defense instead called on the testimony of a defense investigator who described the conditions of the crime scene in the best nighttime lighting conditions and the worst nighttime lighting conditions. He also provided information about a trail through the woods near the accident scene that someone possibly could have used to get away.

The defense also called



Guilty Verdict Rendered

(Left to Right) Richard Jenkins, Attorney David Harrison, Attorney Phil Eldridge and Assistant District Attorney Bill Filmore conference with Judge Ben McLaughlin during the murder trial for Jenkins. (Staff photo by Stephen Crews)

on testimony from family members of Jenkins who tried to discredit the fact that Jenkins may have robbed Brown at the time of the murder and also discredited the testimony of Dennis Paul and give credibility to the possibility of someone else committing the crime.

"These witnesses didn't want to have to come to court but they came to tell what they knew had happened," said Adams in re-

gards to the defense questioning the credibility of Paul and Mr. and Mrs. Shenefield. "I can't thank them enough for being open about what happened that night."

Jenkins will now serve a sentence of life without the possibility of parole for the capital murder and robbery charges. Sheriff Greg Ward stated following the trial that Jenkins will remain in the Geneva County Jail until the state picks him

up. Ward says that usually this takes between one and two months but due to the seriousness of the crime he might be taken sooner. It is also unknown where Jenkins will serve his sentence.

This is the third murder trial held in Geneva County since District Attorney Kirke Adams took office in January of 2005. Adams and his staff have been able to get three convictions in each of the three trials.

The first trial involved Franklin Eugene Herring who was charged with the murder of Travis Thames. He was found guilty of first degree manslaughter in June of 2005.

The second murder trial involved the death of Angel Marie Whitley. Steven Preachers was charged with the crime and found guilty of murder. He was given life without the possibility of parole for the murder.

Timeline

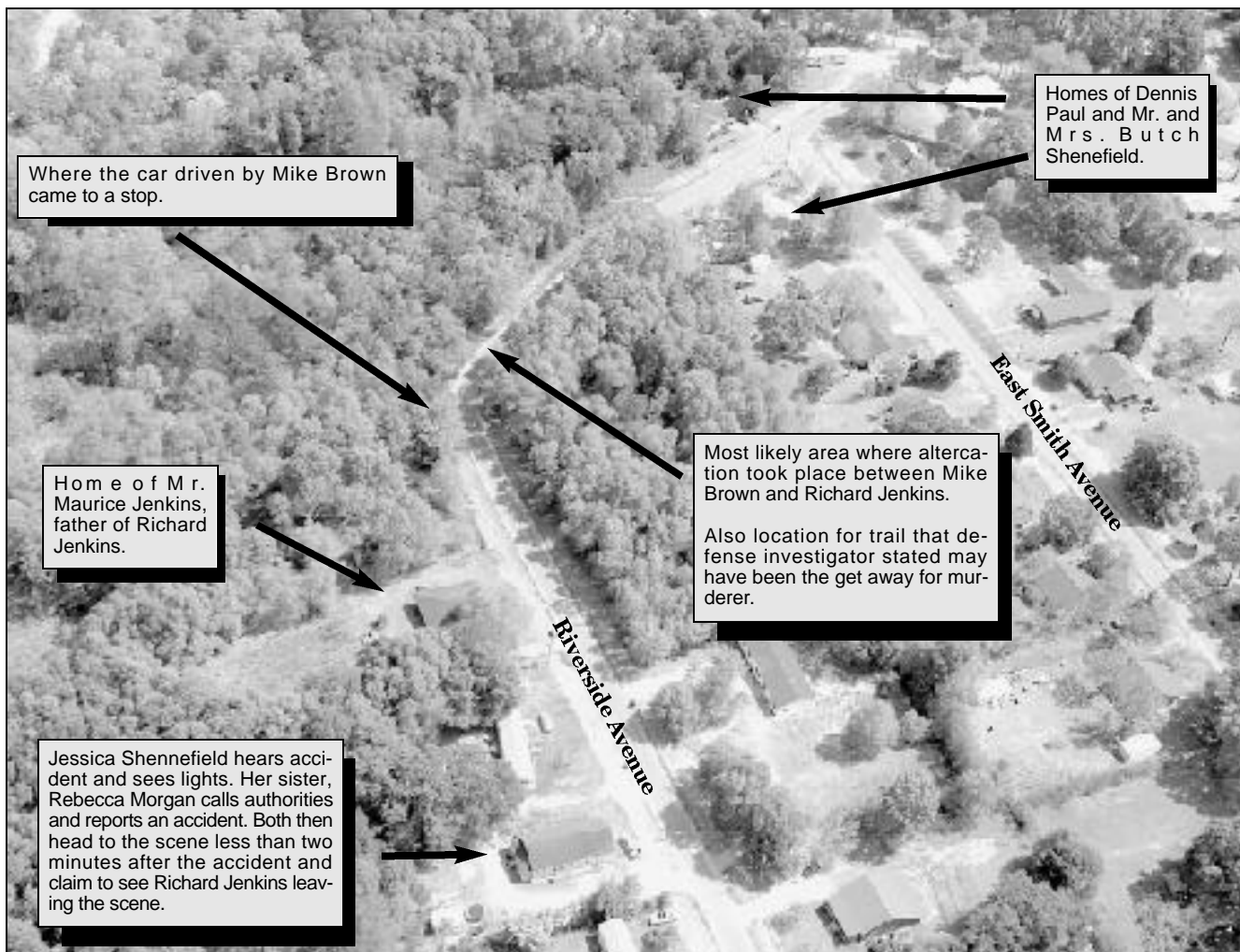
Below is a timeline of the way events unfolded on Saturday, March 20, the night that Mike Brown was murdered by Richard Jenkins. All information is based on testimony provided during the case.

10:02 p.m. - Phone call records indicate Richard Jenkins calls Mike Brown to set up a meeting between the two.

10:02 p.m. - 10:12 p.m. - Mike Brown is murdered sometime during these eight minutes. Jenkins tells Butch and Janice Shenefield to go back to their homes and Richard Jenkins leaves the crime scene.

10:12 p.m. - Geneva Police Department receives a call of an automobile accident on Riverside Avenue on Radio Hill

March 24 - Four days later Richard Jenkins is charged with the murder of Mike Brown.



Where the car driven by Mike Brown came to a stop.

Homes of Dennis Paul and Mr. and Mrs. Butch Shenefield.

Home of Mr. Maurice Jenkins, father of Richard Jenkins.

Most likely area where altercation took place between Mike Brown and Richard Jenkins.
Also location for trail that defense investigator stated may have been the get away for murderer.

Jessica Shenefield hears accident and sees lights. Her sister, Rebecca Morgan calls authorities and reports an accident. Both then head to the scene less than two minutes after the accident and claim to see Richard Jenkins leaving the scene.



Children were busy rounding up easter eggs at First Baptist Church in Geneva on Saturday afternoon, April 15. Pictured above and below are several of the children enjoying the fun and festivities. (Staff photos by Stephen Crews)



Students at Dream Dancers get ready for a big performance.

National Dance Week, spearheaded by the United Dance Merchants of America, is a specific time where those in the dance industry are encouraged to "spread the word" in their communities about the benefits that dance brings to society, and to each individual. Dance builds confidence. Dance builds self esteem. Dance builds an appreciation for what you can accomplish, whether it's mastering a time-step, or achieving professional status. Dance instills a sense of discipline, and a respect for those who work so hard to reach their goals. Dance is great exercise, and develops a sense of team and camaraderie between fellow dancers. And dance gives kids a safe, wholesome, productive opportunity to develop a possible hidden passion.



Statements Made By Richard Jenkins

Statement 1 - (Statement is written out by Jenkins for Sgt. Tony Clemmons of the Geneva Police Department at approximately midnight on March 21) Jenkins says that he was at a friends house and left to walk down to his dad's house and saw a silver car pass by him. The car stopped by the curve. He then heard a loud pop and then the car went speeding into the woods and then he turned around and left. There was another person outside of the car and when the car speed off he left in the opposite direction. The person was wearing dark colored clothes, long sleeved jacket and had blond hair with medium height.

Statement 2 - (Statement is taken by J.R. Ward and signed by Jenkins at 3:38 a.m. on March 21) On March 20 at approximately 7:30 p.m. Jenkins says he stopped by his friend Dennis Pauls' home. Jenkins advised Dennis Pauls he was going to walk to his father's house. Jenkins states that he left walking as as he rounded the curve he came by a white male with blond hair talking to a guy in a silver car. Jenkins states he heard a "smack or pop" as if someone got hit with a baseball bat. Jenkins stated that the car went zooming off into the woods. Jenkins advised that he walked to where the car went into the woods and he then turned around and went back to Dennis Pauls. Jenkins states that Janice (Shenefield) was standing in her front yard and he told her "it looks like someone got ripped off." Jenkins stated that he walked back into Dennis Pauls' house and told him he was leaving. Jenkins state he then got in his car, a gold toyota camry and went straight home.

Statement 3 - (Statement taken at 7:56 a.m. on March 21 by J.R. Ward. The statement is also taped by Ward) Mr. Jenkins states that he wants to change his previous statement that he has given. He states that his previous

story was false and he gave the false statement because he didn't want to be involved because he was scared. Jenkins requested to give his story without an attorney present and state that he went to see Dennis Paul and stayed at his residence for awhile and then he left. Jenkins states me made a phone call later in the evening to Mike Brown on his cell phone. He says the call was for Mike Brown to meet Jenkins so Jenkins could pick up \$100 worth of dope. Jenkins states that he then drove to Radio Hill and parked in front of Dennis Pauls' residence until he saw Mike come by. Jenkins states as he was coming up he saw a man standing there. Jenkins state h saw the man raise his left hand and then saw a flash and heard a bang and saw Mike go driving off through the woods. Jenkins continues day he was something like 30 feet away when this occurred and that Jenkins states that this man was standing on the side of the road and Mike stopped beside him. Jenkins states that Mike was stopped for two or three seconds when the shooting occurred. Jenkins goes on to say that the person was of medium build, approximately 5'8", 160 -170 in pounds and was wearing a dark blue jacket, jeans and either gray or white tennis shoes. He also says that the person never looked at him and that he thinks the person never saw him. He also says that after the show was fired the person turned to the left and walked through the woods. Jenkins stated that the started walking towards Mike's car and he stopped at the edge of the road and then turned around and walked away. He also doesn't know why he went towards Mike's car instead of leaving. He states that the saw "Butch" and told him "You don't want to be down there." Jenkins states that the told Butch "A drug deal went bad and I think someone got ripped off." Jenkins stays that he then got in his car and left and that he was wearing a yellow shirt and blue jeans without shoes. He also

states he then went home and got his wife and went tot his dad's house at Radio Hill. Jenkins state he never changed his clothes and that he went back to Radio Hill to find out what was going on that he heard that people were saying that he had killed somebody. Jenkins states that after maybe 15 minutes he left Radio Hill and went home. When he got there he had a message from the police saying they needed to talk to him.

Statement 4 - (This statement is give in the presence of his attorney David Harrison to J.R. Ward and Tony Clemmons on March 23, 2004) Mr. Jenkins describes the subject that he feels committed the murder of Willie Mike Brown as being 5'6" to 5"10", 165 to 200 pounds, 40 to 42 years of age. He also states that the suspect has should length blond hair and was wearing a blue windbreaker, blue jeans and had grey or white tennis shoes. Jenkins states the suspect raised his left hand and discharged a t pistol while standing a t the pillar of the car. Jenkins states he is between 40 to 60 percent sure the person is "Junior Vaughn" from the Caryville Pitts are in Florida. Jenkins also says that the brake lights were on on the car but can't remember the headlights being on. The interior light was also on in the car. Jenkins states that "Mike" was stopped between three to five minutes and the suspect was at the car. Jenkins state he was about 30 feet from the suspect when he saw a shot fired. Jenkins states as soon as the shot was fired the car sped off and hit a dog. Jenkins states the dog started screaming and it ran past him. Jenkins states the suspect turned and walked into the woods (didn't run). Mr. Jenkins added that t he walked towards Mike's car and then he left.

Editor's Note - Due to time restraints and space limitations, we will have testimony and additional coverage of the Richard Jenkins murder trial in next week's paper.