

## Geneva jury finds Samson man guilty of capital murder

After a Geneva County jury deliberated 40 minutes April 20 to find a Samson man guilty of two counts of capital murder, he was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for intentionally luring a drug dealer to his death in 2004.

"Richard Jenkins stayed around, smoked dope with his friend, to watch his show, to make sure his plan worked," said Geneva County District Attorney Kirke Adams.

Jenkins, 44, of L.H. Ausley Road, was arrested March 25, 2004 and charged with capital murder for robbing Willie Mike Brown, 25, of Geneva, of money and marijuana and then shooting him in the left side of his head while he sat in the driver's seat of his car.

Adams told the seven-man, five-woman jury the case was circumstantial because there was no eyewitness testimony that saw Jenkins shoot Brown and no physical evidence like DNA evidence directly linking Jenkins to the shooting.

"The only defense evidence is Jenkins' statements," said Adams. "There is no evidence because he left the scene, showered and changed clothes."

Testimony by Rebecca Morgan and Jessica Shenefield placed Jenkins wearing shorts and a white T-shirt as he walked from the crime scene. Tire tracks indicated Browns car spun off Radio Hill and crashed into trees about 100 feet from the road in southeastern Geneva.

Geneva patrolman Garry Hughes testified Jenkins was wearing a yellow T-shirt and jeans about an hour later. "His hair was wet and he smelled of soap."

Assistant District Attorney Stephen Smith said statements from Jenkins changed four times about the shooting on March 20. Cell phone records indicated Brown received a call from Jenkins at 10:02 and 9 minutes later, Jenkins was dead. The 911 distress call was made at 10:11.

Brown's then-girlfriend testified she heard him refuse to meet Jenkins on a dirt road.

Defense counsel Phil Eldridge asked the jury to consider the first prosecution witness changed his story.

"Why did Dennis Paul wait four days to tell the police he heard Jenkins threaten to kill Brown for ripping him off in a drug deal?"

Critical to the case was the testimony of Dennis Paul who told the police that he heard his good friend Jenkins threaten to kill Brown for ripping him off.

In the closing argument Adams said Paul made the decision to "put justice before friendship."

Jenkins will remain incarcerated in Geneva County Jail, where he has been since his arrest, to await transfer to a state penitentiary. Geneva County Sheriff Greg Ward estimated the transfer will be in 30 to 45 days.

Adams said he did not seek the death penalty because it "should be reserved for the worst of the worst crimes. I also talked to the Browns' family.

They oppose the death penalty." The case is the second capital murder conviction in Geneva County in as many tries since DA Kirke Adams took office.