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TRY, TRY AGAIN: Jury deadlocked in Wiley slay trial

By TONY WILSON

Superior Court Judge Paul Innes declared the mistrial when the jury -- after nine hours of deliberation over three days -- notified him that a verdict was unreachable as to Bradden Wiley's guilt or innocence.

While a vote-breakdown of the 12 jurors wasn't provided to the judge, Innes said a note from the jury forewoman revealed that "one juror holds contrary opinions on all counts."

Outside the courthouse, speaking on condition of remaining anonymous, three jurors told The Trentonian that as many as nine, 10 or 11 jurors favored outright acquittal of Wiley.

"The vast majority wanted to acquit. There were two, possibly three, who would not accept acquittal," said one juror.

"There was no way to change their minds."

If convicted of murder in the fatal shooting and beating of Anthony Nixon, 26, Wiley would have faced 30 years to life in prison.

The jury also could not reach unanimous agreement on the lesser-included options of convicting Wiley of aggravated or reckless manslaughter or of aggravated assault.

"I think it would be a travesty to justice if they tried him again,"

commented Wiley's beaming lawyer, Robin Lord, as jurors clustered about her afterwards outside the Mercer County Courthouse.

However, Assistant Prosecutor Thomas Meidt told Innes the state's position was definitely to re-try the case.

In the meantime, unable to post bail, Wiley remains incarcerated in the county jail. He opted not to testify at the trial.

The state's case against him was hitched in large part to the testimony of three people who claimed they saw Wiley kill Nixon during a confrontation on drug-infested Walnut Avenue two years ago.

Calling them "criminals, crack-addicts and liars" in her final argument on Tuesday, Lord asked the jurors to dismiss the state witnesses as unbelievable.

The defense lawyer accused prosecutors and Trenton police of "molding" their case to fit the stories of drug-addicted witnesses rather than developing evidence to prove her client's guilt.

At least one juror seemed to agree with her yesterday.

"Because the state and the police department did such a lousy job, you had to get reasonable doubt," said the juror, who requested anonymity.