

# Beating death trial hits jury

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The fate of the first of five men to be tried for the 1994 murder of a Gaithersburg man was in the hands of a county Circuit Court jury last night.

James Seegers, 23, is charged with murder and conspiracy to commit murder in the death of Mark Jenkins, 18.

The prosecution says that Jenkins was attacked by a group of men that included Seegers and his brother Wayne, on Sept. 1, 1994. Jenkins died the day after the attack of blunt trauma.

Jenkins was with Richard

McClain when he was attacked. Prosecutors said McClain was part of a group that attacked Wayne Seegers days earlier in a robbery at Washington Square Park off Route 124, the same field bordering the apartment complex where Jenkins was killed.

James Seegers testified on his own behalf yesterday, denying all of the accusations against him.

"I had nothing to hide," he said of an early interview with police.

Seegers admitted picking up "a board" in the field where his brother was attacked, but said it was not the same one the prosecution says

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## Defense questions woman's credibility

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King's relationship with Beavers was one of several points defense attorney Steven Van Grack raised to argue that King was not a credible witness.

King, who originally was promised by police detectives that she would never have to testify or be identified, was granted immunity by prosecutors — a fact that led to a mistrial in the case of the other four defendants.

She told the jury that detectives threatened to turn her in for welfare fraud and take her children away if she did not cooperate with them. She denied defense accusations that she lied on a welfare money request form.

She also said that she did not know about the reward money until early this year.

Trusty and the State's Attorney's Office offered to pay \$975 in rent for a new town house for King, but she said that she did not know if that was intended to be a reward for testifying or for relocation because she feared for her safety. King did not take the offer.

County homicide detective Michael Brent denied that he and another officer, the first to question King three weeks after the killing, threatened her.

He said police were "desperate in terms of the investigation [being] at a standstill," when they interviewed King. Brent said the promise to King that she would not have to testify was one he hoped would stand, but prosecutors lacked a direct witness and needed her to do so.

Brent said King never changed her story in the nearly two years since Jenkins died of blunt-force trauma the day after the beating.

The prosecution is expected to conclude its case today and the defense will begin on Monday.