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2 found guilty in guard's killing Two guilty in security guard's killing

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Security guard Luis Brito was killed by a shot to the heart, fired as he tried to protect a Coral Gables jewelry store from masked robbers in 2003.

A Miami-Dade jury decided Wednesday that two men who didn't shoot Brito, and weren't even in the Merrick Park Mayor's jewelry store when Brito was killed, should be held responsible for his murder.

Prosecutors said Shird Myrick and Andre Williams took part in the robbery and therefore should be convicted of the murder that resulted. Two other men, Ehren Witt and Milton Hall, also are charged in the case and will be tried at a later date.

Police say Witt is the man who shot Brito. They also say Williams was the getaway driver, and Myrick and Hall had intended to help with the robbery, but Myrick ran away when he saw Brito had a gun. Hall stayed to help Witt grab Rolex watches, police say.

The two-week trial was complicated by claims of witness tampering and allegations of perjury. Two witnesses testified they were threatened. One was arrested after police said she lied on the stand. A third witness was also arrested on perjury charges after she claimed she forgot everything she had told police and prosecutors earlier. A fourth also said he had forgotten his earlier testimony. Assistant State Attorney Gail Levine spent much of her closing arguments Wednesday trying to help the jury sort out the conflicting testimony from those witnesses. Two were scared, she said. Both women felt "so scared, they didn't think they could go home that night, or any night afterward," Levine said. One decided to testify truthfully; the other lied on the stand the first time she testified, Levine said. The second woman was arrested.

In a holding cell, the witness changed her mind and was brought back into court. At that point, she told the jury her original story: she saw the defendants in a silver BMW in Coconut Grove shortly before the robbery. They asked her about security at the Merrick Park mall, she said. A little while later, she saw them ditch the BMW in the Grove. A third witness was different, Levine said. Marquita Wilcox also claimed to have forgotten everything. She wasn't threatened, Levine said. Wilcox just didn't want to help send Myrick, her ex-boyfriend, to prison. Wilcox has a tattoo of Myrick's nickname on her ankle. The other witness with memory problems is Wilcox's brother, also a friend of Myrick's, Levine noted. Levine presented evidence that Myrick's and William's DNA was found in or near the silver BMW. And she noted both fled the area right after Brito was killed. "That screams guilty," she said.

Myrick's attorney, John Weinberg, countered that his client's DNA could have ended up on a towel police found in a bag of burglary tools at any time, and that it didn't prove Myrick was involved in the robbery. Levine also showed a frame-grab from a surveillance video that she said shows Myrick; Weinberg argued that the man doesn't look like his client.

Williams' attorney, Terry Lenamon, argued that crime-scene analysts may have mishandled the latex gloves found in the silver BMW, putting his client's DNA inside them. He pointed out that Williams never even went inside the jewelry store and questioned whether prosecutors had proved that he drove the car.

Jurors didn't buy it and convicted Williams and Myrick of murder and burglary.

Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Reemberto Diaz set sentencing for Thursday.

CHARLOTTE SOUTHERN / FOR THE MIAMI HERALD DEFENDANTS: Andre Williams, left, and Shird Myrick, in Miami-Dade Circuit Court last week, were found guilty.

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