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## Jurors begin Jackson deliberations

By Randall Beach, Register Staff

NEW HAVEN — Jurors began deliberating the fate of John Jackson Monday after hearing final arguments in which defense attorneys suggested another man might have killed Desti Parnell.

The 12 Superior Court jurors received the case in late afternoon. Deliberations are scheduled to resume at 10 a.m. today.

Defense attorney Walter Bansley III asked jurors to begin with a presumption of innocence, something Bansley charged police did not do. "They never considered anybody else a suspect," Bansley said. "But there is reason to believe someone else was responsible."

Bansley alleged Lawrence Jackson (no relation to the defendant) should also have been a suspect because he spent the night with Parnell on what was the final night of her life. Bansley said Jackson did not tell police this, nor did they ask him about the nature of their relationship.

But State's Attorney Michael Dearington cited Lawrence Jackson's testimony he dropped her off at her Legion Avenue apartment the afternoon of July 20, 2004, then went to work, "and that is undisputed." Police believe she was killed between 4 and 5 p.m. that day.

Dearington pointed to forensic evidence: Parnell's blood was found on the belt of John Jackson's jeans and her blood was on his socks. Dearington noted Parnell's upstairs neighbor said she saw John Jackson enter Parnell's apartment the afternoon of July 20, then heard screaming and an argument shortly afterward.

But Bansley said medical testimony about the time of death was inconclusive. He suggested John Jackson and Parnell might have had a verbal argument, then the real killer or killers committed the crime that night.

"This was a crime of rage," Bansley said, noting Parnell was attacked by somebody wielding a hammer and a knife. Bansley said there is no evidence Parnell and John Jackson had had any serious arguments.

As the father of their child, John Jackson was living with Parnell temporarily, but he had agreed to move out the day of the killing. The boy was away at the time.

As for the DNA evidence, defense attorney Walter Bansley IV asked why there was no blood on the jeans found with the belt and no blood on Jackson's boots to accompany the blood on his socks.

Dearington said Jackson could have changed his jeans after the killing and might have walked around the crime scene in his socks. But Dearington noted the last words anybody (a neighbor) heard Parnell say were "Oh, my God" at about 5 p.m. "No one saw her or talked to her after that," Dearington said. He noted she did not go to work nor answer her cell phone.