

Former KCK man convicted of killing witness

By MARK MORRIS
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A former Kansas City, Kan., man was convicted Wednesday of killing an FBI witness to keep him from testifying about a Nebraska credit union robbery.

An accomplice who helped set up the killing was acquitted in Kansas City of the federal murder charge. Both men, however, were convicted of conspiracy to murder a federal witness.

Carl Haskell, 24, stared straight ahead as U.S. District Judge Fernando J. Galtan read the guilty ver-

dicts. Prosecutors have said they intend to seek the death penalty against Haskell at a penalty trial that begins today. His co-conspirator, Curtis Barfield, 38, faces a maximum sentence of five years for his conspiracy conviction.

Authorities identified Haskell as the triggerman in the killing of John Wayne Hogsett on June 8, 1998, in Kansas City.

Two other men, Cornelius Peoples and Xavier Lightfoot, were convicted in 1999 of ordering the murder. An appeals court, however, overturned their convictions, and they are awaiting a second trial

scheduled for October.

Another man, Anthony Lee Hunter, pleaded guilty in 2000 to aiding and abetting in the murder of a federal witness. Hunter acknowledged in his plea that he was paid \$2,500 for his role in hiring Haskell and Barfield to kill Hogsett.

When he was killed, Hogsett was preparing to testify against Lightfoot for robbing a credit union in Omaha, Neb. Peoples allegedly participated in the credit union robbery, and Hunter testified that he met with Peoples to arrange Hogsett's murder. Hunter then discussed the killing with Barfield and

Haskell. Haskell agreed to murder Hogsett for \$10,000.

Hogsett, who shared a home with Lightfoot in the 5600 block of East 56th Street, lived as a woman and went by the name Jovan Ross.

"Jovan Ross was executed in her own home in the worst possible way," Assistant U.S. Attorney Mike Warner said in closing arguments Tuesday. "It was in cold blood."

Haskell's defense attorney, Frederick A. Duchardt, said his client had nothing to do with the murder and contended that prosecutors had used unreliable testimony from convicted felons who were trying to

avoid long prison sentences.

"People are trying to claw themselves out of jail on the back of Carl Haskell," Duchardt said.

Lawyer James B. Chancellor, who represented Barfield, also argued his client's innocence, saying Peoples and his associates were vicious enough to commit the murder themselves. They didn't need contract killers, Chancellor said.

"Do you think these people are going to leave it to someone else?" Chancellor asked.

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