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Jury finds Robinson not guilty

By Charles Mattox
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Local family members are turning against one another and community members are questioning some strategies being used regarding Nicholas County's role in the nationwide war on drugs.

Dewey Clay Robinson, 32, of Myers Road, was found not guilty of two counts of first-degree trafficking in a controlled substance at the conclusion of a Nicholas County Circuit Court jury trial last week.

A jury of nine women and three men returned not guilty verdicts at 6:54 p.m. Tuesday evening after having deliberated for nearly 2 hours and 45 minutes. Their decision came

after closing arguments by Commonwealth's Attorney Doug Wright and Public Defender Jennifer Wittmeyer.

During the trial, two detectives with the Kentucky State Police drug enforcement special investigation (DESI) unit, along with a young cooperating witness who assisted them, were asked several key questions of the prosecution's witnesses during cross-examination, which evoked conflicting testimony between the detectives and the young cooperating witness.

DESI detectives Bret Kirkland of the Kentucky State Police, and Lance Hutchison, a detective with the Harrison

County Sheriff's Office, who is assigned through DESI to work with Kirklund, testified that they had conducted an investigation into illegal drug transactions within Nicholas County, which eventually led to Robinson's arrest.

Robinson, who remains incarcerated due to other charges not related to drugs, let out an audible sigh of relief and smiled at Wittmeyer as the not guilty verdicts were read.

Circuit Judge Robert McGinnis accepted the jury's verdict before releasing the members of the jury. He thanked the jurors for their service to the community and their attentiveness during the trial. He then told Robinson he was released from the charges, which he had just been found not guilty of.

"I knew they didn't have much against me," Robinson said moments later when briefly discussing his charges. "I'm very happy with the verdict and very happy with my attorneys."

Wittmeyer categorized the trial as stemming from Robinson being "taught in a homogeneous mess," during her opening statements to the jury.

Robinson was asked if he had any general comment about why he was charged, or any of the conflicting testimony given during the trial, including testimony against him by his own nephew, Jonathan Doan, the cooperating witness who wore a wire (audio recording device) during the drug transactions and who was paid for his services.

"Yeah," Robinson said "I got something to say about that," but just as he was about to speak, Wittmeyer pleaded her hand on his shoulder and gave a short negative nod with her head as Robinson looked to her.

"Well," Robinson said with a slight grin when he saw Wittmeyer's gestures. "No, I reckon I don't have anything to say after all. I don't forgive my nephew, though. I don't think I'll ever forgive him."



Dewey Robinson



Photo by Charles Mattox

One injured on Lake Road

A single-vehicle accident on Lake Road, Aug. 16, near Carlisle, sent Cody Mitchell, 19, a local resident, to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. Mitchell was driving a 1998 Chevy Cavalier that investigators say left the right-hand side of the roadway, struck a driveway entrance and flipped through the air several times before coming to rest on its side. Mitchell was wearing a seat belt and walked away from the accident with no visible serious injuries. Ambulance personnel transported Mitchell to the Nicholas County Hospital. The accident remains under investigation by Sheriff Dick Garret and Deputy Buckler.

Man dies from gunshot

A squirrel-hunting trip to Nicholas County by two eastern Kentucky cousins turned deadly over the weekend when one man died from what officials believe is a self-inflicted, accidental gunshot.

Nicholas County Sheriff Dick Garrett and Deputy Sheriff Bennie Buckler continued to investigate the shooting death of Thurman Lytle Hutchinson, 29, of 1225 Park Lick Road, Webbsville, in Lawrence County.

On July 24 of last year, Doan, 19, who recently listed his address as the same as Robinson's, received money from DESI detectives to purchase drugs, according to testimony given during the trial. He was searched by DESI detectives and equipped with a wire before being dropped off at Robinson's house.

According to testimony from Kirklund, Hutchison and Doan, Robinson drove himself and Doan to a local resident's home on Walnut Grove and allegedly purchased 29 morphine pills for Doan. He allegedly purchased the pills with money given to him by Doan and gave the pills to Doan when the transaction was completed.

That Walnut Grove resident, who's name was repeated continuously during the trial, was never charged with any crime for his participation was completed.

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Hutchinson was hunting on a farm on Storey Creek Road in rural Nicholas County with his cousin Rodney Jones, 63, of Lovely, which is located in Martin County, when the accident happened.

"Mr. Hutchinson was struck once just above the heart with a single shot from a 12-gauge shotgun," Garrett said. "The shot was fired from extremely close range."

The shooting occurred at approximately 6 p.m. Saturday evening when the cousins were approximately 300 feet apart and hunting squirrels on a hillside. Investigators believe Hutchinson may have slipped on the slope and accidentally discharged his shotgun when he tried to break his fall.

"The safety was off on the shotgun, Buckler, who was the first responder on the scene, said. "Mr. Hutchinson's shoes were untied, and we suspect alcohol may have been a contributing factor in the shooting."

According to Buckler and Garrett, a near-empty pint of whiskey was found on Hutchinson along with prescription medication.

Neither Hutchinson, nor Jones, had a cell phone and Jones walked approximately one mile from the scene of the shooting to a house to call for help. Jones, a former EMT was able to assist his cousin before leaving the scene and although being

slightly disabled for several years, managed to travel the distance to the house within minutes.

Buckler was patrolling nearby and responded immediately when he received the call from dispatch.

"Mr. Hutchinson was barely breathing and had lost a lot of blood and was cold to the touch when I arrived," Buckler said. "I administered CPR and I had my AED with me. Mr. Hutchinson never spoke. The ambulance personnel arrived very quickly after I was on the scene."

Hutchinson was later pronounced dead by Nicholas County Coroner Bill Clark.

An autopsy was conducted by the State Medical Examiner's Office in Frankfort as part of the death investigation, which remains open by the Nicholas County Sheriff's Office.

Hutchinson, 29, of Webbsville, was born Oct. 19, 1978, in Louisa, Graveside services were scheduled for Wednesday at Hutchinson Cemetery in Webbsville. Services conducted by Wilson Funeral Home in Louisa.

Shooting stops robbery

Crime doesn't pay, unless you enjoy getting paid with buckshot. A shooting incident near Myers Station last week sent one man to the emergency room and later to jail. The shooter, whose name has not been released by investigators, is being praised for his decisive actions while in the course of protecting his life and property.

"I'm not advocating violence," Nicholas County Deputy Sheriff Bennie Buckler said of the incident. "But I will say that everyone has a right to defend themselves and their property. The folks out around Myers Station and along Cassidy Creek, as well as many other sections of Nicholas County, are simply tired of having their stuff stolen. Our investigation into the incident continues but we have no plans on filing any charges against the shooter."

According to Buckler, Jason E. Strange, of Cane Run Road, Carlisle, and who turns 30 years old on Aug. 22, was "caught in another man's barn," and was suspected of stealing items from the barn. Strange was told to halt and when he moved and had what appeared to be a weapon in his hand he was fired upon by the property owner. Strange was struck once with a number eight shot fired from approximately 65 feet away from a 12-gauge shotgun.

The shooter called the police and after responding to the call, Buckler transported Strange to the local emergency room where he was treated with superficial shotgun pellet wounds to his buttocks. Strange, who had an outstanding warrant from Mason County law officers was also charged with trespassing and transported to jail.

"Other charges against Strange are pending," Buckler said.

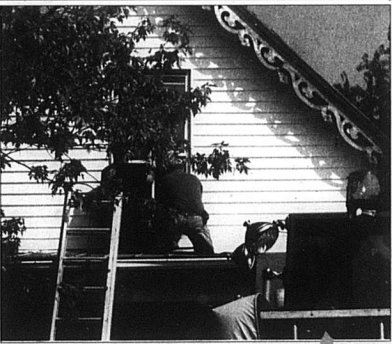


Photo by Mike Bond

Some damage at fire

Nicholas County Firemen extinguished a fire at a house on Moorefield Road, Saturday. It is the residence of the Watkins family. According to NCFD Chief Mark Hughes the structure received moderate damage, however there were no injuries.

Bennie warns school speeders

Nicholas County Deputy Sheriff Bennie Buckler is asking those driving on school property at all times to slow down.

The posted speed limit is 15 miles per hour and Buckler says he plans to run radar and issue citations to violators.

"The safety of the children must come first," he said. "I have had several complaints. We don't want someone to get hurt."

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