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## Title: MISTRIAL DECLARED IN MURDER CASE.(News)

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Admitting there seemed to be plenty of evidence to convict his client of aggravated murder, Djuan Bell's attorney convinced the majority of jurors otherwise Wednesday, resulting in a hung jury.

Bell, 21, had his trial declared a mistrial when seven of the 12 jurors voted to acquit Bell, his attorney, Clyde Bennett II, said Wednesday.

"(Bell) looks forward to his next day in court. I firmly believe he's going to be acquitted next time," Bennett said.

"This was a guy who allegedly executed a guy, shot him in the back of the head in front of eyewitnesses. Mr. Bell was pleased (with the mistrial) because it seemed the evidence was overwhelming that he was guilty."

That's what prosecutors believed when they told jurors that Bell had been good friends with Laurice Welch since both were age 10. Neighbors, the two essentially grew up together, but Bell was accused of luring Welch outside Dec. 11, convincing Welch to let Bell look at his gun and then shooting Welch to death with it -- allegedly because Bell was upset that Welch sold drugs to Bell's mother.

Welch's body was found outside his Springfield Township home early that morning by garbage collectors.

Bennett earned the mistrial, he said, by discrediting the prosecution's main witness, Jamel Combs, who saw the shooting. Combs, Bennett told jurors, isn't being prosecuted on unspecified charges until after he testified in the Bell case.

Bell, assistant prosecutor Anne Flanagan told jurors, asked friends to lie to say that Bell was with them the night Welch was killed, got rid of the clothes he was wearing that night and hid a gun in a plastic bag in his yard. The gun has never been found. Bell also went into hiding, and wasn't captured until Jan. 15. The aggravated murder charge carries a maximum sentence of 21 years to life in prison.

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