

WASHINGTON CityPaper

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2006
THE CITY DESK

Hansen Killers Convicted

BY JONATHAN YORK

Defense attorney Steven Kupferberg groans on the phone: "Yeah, it's a sad day, sad day."

Today the jury read its verdict in Courtroom 116, and **Kupferberg's** client, Marquette Ward, was judged guilty of killing Mario Evans and guilty of conspiring to kill Jahkema Princess Hansen. Ward's best friend, Franklin Thompson, was judged guilty of making the hit.

Kupferberg's aggression put some witnesses off, his constant objections annoyed the judge, and he once vented a wild hypothesis that Princess helped kill Evans. Day after day, as he waved his short arms and turned red, anyone could see that he was losing some necessary objectivity. Then Thompson's counsel, Rudolph Acree, would take over in an even tone, and the air would cool down.

Acree kept witnesses sane, but **Kupferberg gave a great performance.** The man seemed ready to take bullets for his client, and that feeling must have comforted Ward as much as it left everyone else uneasy.

"When I approach a case like this I get so wrapped up in the facts," said Kupferberg, a former prosecutor. "I'm really sad about it because Marquette is a genuinely nice guy and didn't deserve the card he was dealt."

The convictions of Thompson and Ward may or may not be justice. The chief witness against them was Timika Holiday, who had a bad memory and a sexual history with both men and a weakness for obscuring the truth. The men will be sentenced Jan. 19, and they will appeal their convictions.

But there is one clear injustice: the press release that the U.S. Attorney's office published this evening. Its boilerplate quotes ("Today's guilty verdict successfully ends one of the most shocking

and tragic episodes that our city has experienced . . . ") are attributed to U.S. Attorney Jeffrey Taylor. Taylor has held office only since Sept. 29. He has never investigated, prosecuted, or argued in D.C. criminal matters.

The day doesn't belong to him but to prosecutors Deborah Sines and Michelle Jackson. They are mentioned only once, near the bottom of the page. Jackson led cops and experts through delicate testimony; Sines examined most of the witnesses who knew Princess well.

Sines tried to get the truth out of Holiday, but no amount of preparation can hold a shaky witness together. **The young woman waffled on the stand, and Kupferberg elicited one or two answers that contradicted her earlier testimony. If Kupferberg has anything to say about it now, she'll be investigated for perjury.**

How soon will he call the U.S. Attorney's office about that? **"As soon as I count to 10," he says. ■**

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