

# TAYLOR

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# Blood flow patterns questioned

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The civil lawsuit involving the controversial shooting of 16-year-old Michael Henry Taylor is concluding its fourth week of testimony in a Hancock County court. The jury of six—five women and one man, with one female alternate — heard testimony from a ballistics expert, an auto body mechanic and further testimony from Nancy Hobbs Taylor, the mother of Michael Taylor, who filed the lawsuit in 1989.

Following his arrest for attempted auto theft, Taylor was sitting handcuffed in the rear of an Indianapolis Police Department squad

car, a 1987 LTD Crown Victoria, while being transported by IPD officer Charles Penniston.

How a puddle of blood pooled underneath the right rear passenger seat has long been a point of contention. City lawyers, led by attorney Mary Ann Oldham, presented a video tape that showed how water poured into the back seat can soak the rear seat and eventually seep through holes from the interior of the car onto the ground under the car.

Defense attorney John Moss maintains this video presentation in 1996 of an 9-year-old 1987 car is inconsistent with the city's opening summary. Delonzo Rhyane, an auto body mechanic since 1960, testifying on behalf of the plaintiff, Nancy Taylor said, "There is no part of the interior of the car open to the ground." The exception being around the front fire wall. Rhyane continued, "Cars are made to stay dry and not to absorb moisture. They are sealed and resealed."

Nancy Taylor took the stand for a second time Monday, speaking about the effects of the loss of her son. She shared with the jury some of the contributions her son had made to the maintenance of their household. "I looked forward to Michael's assistance," which she explained came mainly in the form of Michael cutting grass and shoveling snow to buy his own clothes. "I had to work two jobs and also go to nursing school full time. Michael would clean our house so I could work."

City attorneys questioned Nancy Taylor about Michael's assistance to her while he was locked up in a home for boys. She explained that during that time her other children would aid her around the home.

After her testimony, Taylor could often be seen silently reading the Bible, occasionally

lifting her head to ponder what she had read in the book of Hebrews.

Stacey Garvin, a ballistics expert called by Moss testified the gun was "at least 24 inches away from Taylor's head when fired." Garvin based his conclusions on Taylor's "hair not being singed" and "the bullet did not cause an exit wound."

During cross examination, questions were raised whether the bullets entered as evidence were the same bullets in the gun on the day of the shooting. Garvin pointed out that all the bullets would only fit into the gun's chamber after being forced in. After inserting bullets in the chamber only one of the six jurors were able to remove a bullet from the chamber.

The suit will enter into its fifth week Monday.

"This case is going slow. I hope the pace picks up. The jury is getting tired," said Oldham.

The city will present its case to the jury when lawyers for the plaintiffs conclude. "We hope to get into our case this week, and within two weeks have the trial over." Oldham said, "This (the shooting) is a tragic lost to Nancy Taylor, but it is just not our fault."

Moss and co-counsel David Shaheed have not expressed how soon they will conclude their case. They filed more subpoenas for witnesses this week.



Michael Taylor in the custody of the Indianapolis Police Department prior to his death. IPD officers say they searched Taylor more than once. A .32-caliber revolver supposedly was hidden in his shoe, enlargement at right. (Recorder file photo)

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