

Witness in New Haven homicide trial testifies another man claimed to be killer

By Randall Beach, New Haven Register

Edward Andrew Thompson's former girlfriend testified Tuesday a man in a bar told her that he, not defendant Larry Johnson, killed Thompson because Thompson had stolen cocaine from him.

The girlfriend was a prosecution witness but defense attorney Norm Pattis seized on her statement to police that she had the barroom conversation a week after Thompson's death.

Johnson, 34, is charged with murdering Thompson, who was 37, on Grand Avenue Oct. 13, 2011. He also is charged with carrying a pistol without a permit.

"This man told you, 'I'm the one who killed Eddie?'" Pattis asked. The witness confirmed that was what he said.

"He said, 'I killed Eddie because he stole my drugs and I want my (expletive) money?'" Pattis asked. She confirmed he had said this, as well.

The witness also confirmed the

Standing behind Johnson, with his hands on the defendant's shoulders, Pattis asked the witness: "You can't say whether this is the man who killed him, can you?" She conceded she could not.

man at the bar then told her, "I'll have you killed, too."

When asked by Pattis if the man at the bar was Johnson, she said it was not.

The witness described seeing Thompson shot twice on Grand Avenue that night, but said the shooter was wearing a hood, and "I didn't see his face."

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Pattis also read to the jury the witness' police statement in which she that the night Thompson was killed, he gave her some money and told her to go into a nearby bar and buy some pills for some customers of Thompson's.

In that statement, the witness said she did obtain the pills but when she came back outside, the customers were gone.

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She is quoted saying in the police statement that she told Thompson, "Eddie, let's go home. You're gonna get killed, now I got these pills on me, and they're not even around."

After Pattis read aloud the four-page excerpt of the witness' police statement, she could not answer his follow-up questions.

Asked by Assistant State's Attorney Stacey Miranda if she knew the name of the man who had threatened to kill her, the witness said, "I can't remember because I'm always drunk."

But the witness said she was not drunk as she was testifying.

The witness, who cried when she was shown Thompson's photo, kissed it and said he had been "the love of my life."

She said she was walking on Grand Avenue with Thompson when a hooded man suddenly came up to Thompson. "The guy shot him twice, and he went down. It was crazy. Tears were coming out of his eyes, and he passed out."

Prosecutors are trying to prove Johnson was angry because he had been stabbed by "a white boy" during a street argument and that Johnson then shot Thompson in a case of mistaken identity.

The jurors Tuesday heard testimony by a man who said he was actually the person who stabbed Johnson.

The man said he was a heroin and

crack addict at the time and was on Ferry Street in Fair Haven that night, having a physical argument with his girlfriend, a prostitute.

He said they were fighting because he wanted to take the money she had made that night and leave, so he could use the money to buy heroin. She wanted to stay "and turn more tricks."

As they argued, the man said, Johnson pulled up in his car and tried to help the man's girlfriend. When Johnson got out of his car, the man stated, "He was clutching something in his sweatshirt. I thought he had a gun."

"I grabbed his arm," the man said. "He got his arm free and punched me in the top of the head. I dropped down on one knee in like a bear hug; I pulled out my knife and stabbed him in the back."

The man stepped down from the witness stand and, using Pattis as a model, demonstrated how he had gone down on one knee and allegedly stabbed Johnson in his lower back.

The man's girlfriend also testified Tuesday, saying she got into the back of Johnson's car and heard the two men fighting outside. She said she knew Johnson.

When Johnson got back into the car and drove off with her, she testified, he told her he had been stabbed. ■