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## Jurors to question witnesses

**Jury chosen for 2005 Royal Oak murder trial**

- **Jury participation is a growing trend.**

**By Christy Strawser**  
**Daily Tribune Staff Writer**

PONTIAC -- A jury was chosen Tuesday to weigh evidence in the 2005 street shooting of Kyle Belevender and decide the fate of his alleged killer, Leon Treadwell.

Treadwell sat quietly in a tie and dress pants through a long day of jury selection in Oakland Circuit Court, occasionally whispering to his attorney before a juror was tossed out.

A room full of potential jurors were questioned throughout the day and released for various reasons -- personal ties with law enforcement, an uneasy history with police, bias -- and many times for no obvious reason.

After 13 jurors were approved, Judge Fred Mester informed the jury they will take part in an unusual homicide trial because he will allow jurors to question witnesses on the stand.

"It's a growing trend," said Mester, adding that only a few courtrooms in the country allow jurors to chime in during open court.

The judge explained that all jurors will be given notepads and pens to write notes and

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questions. When the prosecutor and defense attorney finish with a witness, Mester said he will turn to the jury pool and say: "Now, ladies and gentlemen, you may ask your questions."

That's the jurors' cue to slip their questions to the judge. Mester said he and the attorneys will decide if the question is relevant and if it is, the witness will face the query.

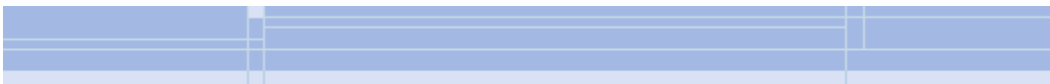
Testimony begins Thursday in the case that shocked Royal Oak in Dec. 29, 2005, when Belevender, 17, was shot in broad daylight on residential Harwood Street and died from multiple gunshot wounds on the front lawn of a retiree's residence.

Mester told the jury that facts will show Belevender was "attempting to purchase marijuana." The drug deal was supposed to happen in the area of Dequindre and Eight Mile roads, according to police, but one of the parties couldn't get a ride that far and they agreed to meet at the house of a mutual friend in Royal Oak.

Treadwell, 20, was nabbed a year later in North Carolina by a task force of U.S. Marshals and Mecklenburg County Sheriff's deputies who had staked out the man long suspected of killing Belevender. Treadwell had been on the lam since the killing, police said.

He used an alias and a family member funneled him cash, police said. Royal Oak detectives followed up on tips and eventually found Treadwell staying with an acquaintance. He was caught and extradited without incident.

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