

Capital murder trial of Navy cadet may mirror soured relationship

PORT WORTH (AP) — A former Academy cadet urged her friend to kill her romantic rival rearing "shoot her, kill her, her," the defendant's one-best friend testified Monday during the first day of testimony in Zamora's capital murder trial. Kristina Mason said that days before the killing her friend had contacted the couple plotted to strangle Jones' neck and throw her body in a lake. Zamora said she got agitated and attacked Jones sooner than she had planned, Mason said. After they had taken her out to a Diane lost control and began to strangle her with a weight over the head. She testified. Mason also said that during a late-conversation at Mason's home, Zamora admitted she decided to kill her boyfriend David Graham. Zamora is accused in the slaying of Jones, allegedly carried out in retaliation for a one-time high-

school fling she had with Graham. Zamora was a freshman at the Naval Academy and Graham was in his first year at the Air Force Academy when they were charged in September 1996. According to statements Graham and Zamora have given police, they lured Jones to a secluded road, Zamora hit the girl with a dumbbell weight, then Graham shot her in the head when she tried to flee. Prosecutors allege Zamora told several friends and her family about the killing. Later, Mason testified that Zamora told her David had killed the girl to "prove his love." Defense attorney John Lineberger pressed Mason during cross-examination to explain why she did not come forward sooner with her testimony and why she at first told a grand jury that she did not know about Zamora's alleged role in the killing. "I was scared that she (Zamora) would kill me if I told... or someone would come after me," Mason said.

Lineberger also suggested that Mason might have concocted details of her story after reading a written confession by Graham that was

"I was scared that she (Zamora) would kill me if I told ... or someone would come after me."
Kristina Mason
Trial witness

published in a local newspaper. After several minutes of questioning, State District Judge Joe Drago seemed irritated with the defense, which at times began to ask for details about Zamora's friends.

"At this rate we won't finish during my lifetime," Drago said, urging attorneys to speed up their questioning. Drago also upheld several prosecution objections saying that the questions were irrelevant or would force Mason to speculate. Early Monday, prosecutors used their opening statements to portray a cold and calculated plot allegedly carried out by Zamora and Graham. "Like a puzzle when the pieces are fit together you will see a brutal and senseless murder committed by this woman and her boyfriend," assistant prosecutor Michelle Hartman said. Hartman emphasized that after the killing Zamora went on with life as usual, going to school, scoring well on tests and dating Graham. Lineberger told jurors that physical evidence from the crime scene would contradict the prosecution's allegations. He portrayed Zamora as a caring woman focused on her family and academics.

Morales suggests contempt-of-court order

AUSTIN (AP) — Attorney General Dan Morales suggested Monday that a Republican running for his job and several state lawmakers should be held in contempt of court by a federal judge who has approved Texas' \$15.3 billion tobacco settlement. GOP attorney-general hopeful John Cornyn and other lawmakers filed motions with the Texas Supreme Court challenging \$2.3 billion in attorney fees to private lawyers who helped represent the state. U.S. District Judge David Folsom approved the deal last month in which the tobacco industry agreed to pay billions for the state's costs of treating tobacco-related illnesses. "If I were the judge, I certainly would have to consider the prospect of imposing sanctions for contempt, given that his order squarely spelled

out that he retained exclusive jurisdiction and that any objections that were to be raised must be raised in front of him," Morales, a Democrat who is not running for re-election, said. "These candidates ... are really playing with fire in terms of waving a red flag in front of a federal district court who has warned them not to use his court and not to use him for their political purposes." Striking at Cornyn, Morales added, "All they care about is getting their name in the newspaper because they're running last in a three-person race in a Republican primary for attorney general." Morales has not asked for a contempt order but noted that such action is an option in papers filed with the court. Cornyn, a former Supreme Court justice, said only the state court can determine Morales' duty under the state constitution. "To hold a press conference and denounce the persons who are seeking to challenge him ... demonstrates that he (Morales) has very se-

rious concerns about the legality of his actions, and he'll stop at nothing to prevent a proper court from deciding whether he has acted within his authority," Cornyn said. Cornyn's campaign manager disputed Morales' assessment of the race among Cornyn, Barry Williamson and Tom Pauken. The Supreme Court cannot act on the challenges filed with it because Morales has filed a motion to move them to the federal court, according to Morales' office. Cornyn plans to file a petition to move his challenge back to the state court. Morales emphasized he is not including in his criticism Senate Finance Committee Chair Bill Ratliff, R-Mount Pleasant, and House Appropriations Committee Chair Robert Junell, D-San Angelo. They filed a separate challenge on the expenditure of the settlement money. Morales called them sincere. Rep. Kyle Janek, one of seven lawmakers who challenged the attorney fees Friday, defended the action as an effort to ensure taxpayer money is properly spent.



Morales

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