

COURT EXPERIENCE

I went to the court session on Wednesday afternoon at 2:00 and stayed until around 4:35. They did not start court though until a little after 2. Before court started everyone was talking to each other and having a good time. There was only one other person in the courtroom besides myself watching the trial and that person was also from this class.

When court resumed the lawyers were trying to agree to certain things concerning the trial before the jury came back in. Since I had not seen the beginning of this trial, I had no idea who was suing whom or what was going on. Finally after they had got those things ironed out and a map set up, the jury was finally called back into the courtroom for closing arguments.

To give the basics that I picked up from closing arguments was that Guge who owns the Exxon on 105 extension was wanting more money from the state for some property that they were confiscating for construction. The state was offering around \$60,000 and he wants \$300,000. The lawyer for Guge went first. He went on forever it seemed like. It was over an hour that he went on talking. Some of the jurors were falling asleep as well as the judge while he was speaking. It seems that he could have been more concise with his argument. Pretty bad when even the judge nods off. The judge even got up and left during part of the closing arguments.

The states attorney began his closing arguments. His name was McKinney. His argument was straight to the point. He got his point across and actually kept members of the jury awake. While he was giving his closing arguments, the two attorneys for Guge and Guge himself were whispering between one another. After McKinney finished his closing arguments, which was about 30 minutes or so, Guge's attorney had his last say so. I believe that man talked to hear his ownself!

After the closing arguments, the judge asked the jury if they wanted a break. They indicated that they wanted one so the judge called for a break. During the break, one of the jurors asked to be removed from the jury. She said that she was sick. The judge conferred with the attorneys and they let her go home. The first alternate took her place. He also released the second alternate juror to go home since she was not needed. Then when they came back in the judge gave them instructions concerning the deciding on the case. The judge seemed bored during this process as well. Finally the judge sent the jury to the room to deliberate. When I left the jury was still deliberating.

The judge's name was Johnston and the bailiff was Collins. Collins told us that Johnston was the judge from Charlotte that was on that big murder case where a man had killed all those women. As I was leaving the courtroom, the lawyers for Guge stopped me. Talked to me for a few minutes and then asked me what I would do if I was on the jury. Just from the closing arguments, I wouldn't give Guge much more than the \$60,000 if any. If I had to listen to Guge's attorney for the entire trial, I probably vote against him for that reason.