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Inmate: Gregory said it was hard 'watching her die'

By FRANK FERNANDEZ, Staff writer 

DAYTONA BEACH -- William Gregory said, according to an inmate testifying Tuesday at Gregory's double-murder trial, that the most difficult part of killing his ex-girlfriend and her boyfriend "was watching her die."

Gregory is accused of shooting Skyler Meekins, 17, and her boyfriend, Daniel Dyer, 22, as they slept in Meekins' grandparents' house near Flagler Beach on Aug. 21, 2007. Gregory is accused of putting the shotgun's muzzle against Meekins' forehead before pulling the trigger and bringing the muzzle within an inch of Dyer's head before shooting him. The 28-year-old Gregory could face the death penalty if convicted of the first-degree murder charges.

Gregory would often write on a legal pad and occasionally lean over to speak to his attorney as the jury of 12 women and three men, including three alternates, heard evidence on Tuesday in Circuit Judge William A. Parsons' courtroom.

Eric Goebel, 39, was an inmate in the St. Johns County jail when Gregory was moved there from the Flagler County jail soon after the killings. Goebel testified on Tuesday that he and Gregory would work out and play cards together. Goebel added that Gregory would ask him some legal questions. Goebel, who has at least eight prior felony convictions, said he took a course to become a certified paralegal while pulling a five-year prison stint. Goebel said he started taking notes after his conversations with Gregory.

Goebel said he asked Gregory what was it like to kill someone, to see if he had really done it.

"He never really said yes or no," Goebel testified. "But he said the worst part about it all was watching her die."

Prosecutor Jacquelyn Roys also asked Goebel about whether Gregory knew Dyer was with Meekins that night. Goebel said Gregory did.

"He said he was outside the house, watching the house," Goebel said.

Goebel said Gregory told him he had seen the daughter he had with Meekins while in the house. Gregory's mother, Lynda Probert, and Meekins' father, Charles "Hap" Meekins, now share custody of 4-year-old Kyla.

"I remember he said when he left he'd seen the child," Goebel said. "But he didn't do anything to it. He didn't mess with the child."

Roys asked Goebel whether Gregory had said why he killed the couple.

"The main reason was that he just couldn't stand to see her with a new boyfriend," Goebel said.

Goebel added that Gregory was worried his child would have been taken away from him.

Goebel also said Gregory had been worried about leaving fingerprints behind. Gregory said he used a shotgun because he thought it would leave less gunshot residue than a pistol, Goebel said. But Gregory thought he had tested positive for gunshot residue and couldn't understand why because he had jumped into a pool, Goebel said.

In actuality, no gunshot residue was found on Gregory.

Gregory also would get agitated because all his phone calls from jail were recorded, Goebel said. Gregory said his family was trying to help him by being his alibi but they couldn't get their stories straight since the calls were recorded, Goebel said.

Prosecutors have argued that Gregory has tried to coach his family on what to say regarding his whereabouts on the night of the killings.

During cross examination, Gregory's defense attorney Garry Wood argued that the actual number of felonies linked to Goebel was 12 and not eight.

Goebel is currently serving a 51-month sentence in the Putnam Correctional Institution on a cocaine trafficking charge. He has 49 days remaining on the prison sentence before going on 10 years' probation.

Wood questioned Goebel about whether he had received a lighter prison sentence in exchange for his testimony. Goebel denied it. Goebel had testified earlier he just wanted to do the right thing. Wood asked Goebel if he would seek early termination of his probation. Goebel said he would but believed he'd have to wait five years before doing that.

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