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Jury clears man of Pleasant Ridge attack

Defense said neighbors set up defendant

BY DAN HORN

The Cincinnati Enquirer

From the day he was
 charged with viciously assault-
 ing a child, Jimmy White com-
 plained that the harsh words of
 his own neighbors had cost him
 his freedom.

In a Hamilton County court-
 room Friday, a dozen strangers
 gave it back.

After four hours of delibera-
 tions, the jury concluded that
 Mr. White was not the man who
 bound, gagged and assaulted a
 14-year-old girl last summer in
 Pleasant Ridge.

After hearing Common Pleas
 Judge Norbert Nadel read the
 verdict, Mr. White embraced
 his attorney and repeatedly
 whispered "Thank you" to the
 12 jurors.

"You're going home," said
 his attorney, Clyde Bennett II.
 "It's over now. You're going
 home."

Mr. White won his case de-
 spite the testimony of the girl.

The girl told the jury in
 gruesome detail how a man tied
 her up near some railroad
 tracks on Aug. 12, molested her
 and cut her several times with a
 knife.

When the girl was asked by
 prosecutors if she recognized
 her attacker, she pointed to Mr.

White.

"Yeah," she said. "It was
 him."

But Mr. Bennett reminded
 jurors that the girl had failed to
 pick Mr. White out of a police
 lineup shortly after the attack.

She did not identify him, he
 said, until several neighbors
 told the girl that they believed
 Mr. White was the attacker. He
 said those neighbors then ar-
 ranged for Mr. White to visit a
 home where the girl was stay-
 ing, giving her a chance to see

him in person.

Mr. Bennett described the
 meeting as a "set-up" that
 eventually led to his client's
 arrest.

"This was a brutal, heinous,
 horrible crime," Mr. Bennett
 said. "But Jimmy White did not
 commit it. He knows it, I know
 it, his family knows and now a
 jury knows it."

He said Mr. White, 40, was
 in the vicinity of the attack
 because he had gone shoe shop-
 ping for his sons at a nearby

store.

The girl said her attacker
 wore a green hat and green
 shirt, and a neighbor said he
 saw Mr. White wearing the
 same outfit around the time of
 the attack.

But Mr. Bennett said Mr.
 White does not own a green
 hat. He also noted that the
 clothing description was similar
 to the employee uniform of a
 store located a few blocks from
 the crime scene.

Prosecutors said tests of

blood, partial fingerprints and
 other forensic evidence did not
 link Mr. White to the crime.

His first trial in December
 ended without a verdict when
 the jury declared it was hope-
 lessly deadlocked, voting 10-2
 for acquittal.

After hearing the verdict in
 the latest trial, Mr. White's re-
 latives shouted "thank you" and
 exchanged hugs.

"We know he's innocent,"
 said his sister, Deborah Pitts.
 "It's been hell."