

## Trial begins in bystander death

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### Document Text

Woman, her fetus fatally shot in October

Nobody meant to fatally shoot pregnant Tawnia Kirksey last October, prosecutors and Eric Jackson's attorney agree.

But that's where the agreement ends.

Assistant Hamilton County Prosecutor Jim Butler said Jackson meant to kill Eli Wheeler, but caught Kirksey, 29, in the crossfire.

Jackson's attorney, Clyde Bennett, said his client fired in self-defense; Wheeler pulled a gun first.

At stake is a possible life prison term for Jackson if the jury finds him guilty on two murder charges, one for Kirksey and another for her fetus.

On the afternoon of Oct. 23, Jackson, 27, and Eli Wheeler got into a fight on President Drive outside the Fay Apartments over money Wheeler said Jackson owed him.

Kirksey was also outside that afternoon.

In opening statements Monday, Butler said the two fought over the money, and then settled down.

The fight reignited when Jackson's brother came and asked what happened, Butler said.

Jackson "had a gun, and Wheeler had a gun," Butler said. "Wheeler was backing away from (Jackson) and shots were fired."

A bullet from Jackson's gun punctured Kirksey's lung, killing her and her unborn child.

Bennett said Jackson had called his brother to get the money, so Jackson could pay his debt.

But Wheeler pulled out a gun anyway and fired, and Jackson returned fire, Bennett said.

Jackson "was unaware young Miss Kirksey was even present," Bennett said.

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### Abstract (Document Summary)

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