

Flowers murder trial ends in hung jury

By LINDA PUTNAM

After nearly 24 hours of deliberation, a jury of seven women and five men was unable to agree on a verdict on the most serious murder and manslaughter charges against Robert Flowers Jr., 23, of Manteo, in the shooting death of Angelo Bennett of Plymouth.

Judge Richard Parker, presiding over the trial in Dare County Superior Court, declared a mistrial Tuesday for this portion of the trial.

The jury did return a not guilty verdict on the charges of attempted first degree murder and attempted second degree murder and assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill. These charges arose out of allegations by Kevin White that Flowers had shot at him after shooting at Bennett.

The trial began Monday, July 9, with jury selection. The trial went to the jury last Friday morning, and the jury deliberated Friday, Monday and half of Tuesday.

Assistant District Attorney Robert Trivette said the state would retry the case, probably sometime in the fall, since defense attorney Kris Felthousen wants to study the trial transcripts. Producing these transcripts can take several months.

An attempt at a plea bargain during the lunch break Tuesday was unsuccessful.

Responding to a question as to his opinion on why the jury was

not convinced of Flowers' guilt, Trivette cited witness credibility as a possible cause.

Defense attorney Felthousen said, "We're happy with the outcome." He also cited witness credibility as a possible cause for the case ending as it did.

Flowers was accused of shooting Bennett, hitting him in the shoulder and the base of the skull, in a confrontation that occurred in January 2000. Casings were found near the body that were consistent with the gun Flowers admitted having that night, and eyewitnesses said they saw Flowers shoot Bennett. They also said Bennett was not armed.

The medical examiner who performed the autopsy said the bullets entered Bennett from the back.

Arguing self-defense, Flowers said he thought Bennett had a gun and that he shot Bennett from the front.