

## UPDATE: Shooter convicted of murder in Central Park slaying

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BY KEITH EPPS

Brandon Lee Smith admitted yesterday that he fired the shot that killed Dasan Richardson.

But Smith testified that he didn't intentionally shoot Richardson, 30, or anyone else. He claimed the shot was simply a reaction to being pummeled by two people outside Mi Casa Restaurant the morning of Jan. 12, 2008.

Smith, 20, is charged with first-degree murder and using a firearm in the commission of a felony.

A jury heard evidence the past two days in Fredericksburg Circuit Court and is expected to begin deliberations this morning.

During the trial's first two days, defense attorneys Stuart Sullivan and Carolyn Seklii have not disputed that Smith fired shots. But they are contending that the first-degree murder charge is improper because the shooting was not premeditated.

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Richardson was one of several people hired to provide security at a heavily attended hip-hop event that night at the Central Park nightspot.

According to the evidence, Smith and four of his friends were forced out of the club because employees claimed they had caused trouble at earlier events.

One of the security men put Smith in a choke-hold while removing him. Smith said he passed out while in the hold and came to on the sidewalk.

Witnesses said Smith vowed to return and did so a short time later. This time, there was a major brawl near the door involving Smith's friends and the security workers.

During the ensuing commotion, two shots were fired. A .45-caliber round struck Richardson--who was not directly involved with Smith at the time--in the chest.

Richardson walked back into the club and collapsed as hysterical party-goers streamed out of the club.

Several witnesses, including some obviously reluctant ones, identified Smith as the shooter during the trial.

Warrants for Smith's arrest were obtained the same day as the shooting, but he wasn't picked up until a little over a week later.

Acting on a tip received by the Colonial Beach Police Department, police surrounded a home just outside the town and took Smith into custody.

Police at the time said that Smith, also known as "BeBe," is a member of "Pound Property," a gang which operates primarily in Colonial Beach, King George and Westmoreland. The alleged gang affiliation has not come up in the trial.

The gun used to kill Richardson was later recovered in Mattox Creek in Westmoreland. There was conflicting testimony about whether Smith or someone else threw the gun into the creek.

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