

Relief from page A1

lunch, did not hesitate to convict, much to the relief of a close friend of Melissa Bovaiv, 21.

"I'm very happy," said Megan McWilliams, a friend of "Missy" Bovaiv for six years.

McWilliams was sitting next to Arthur Cayce's former girlfriend who testified against him.

The woman will likely have to testify against him again in January when he stands trial on charges that he abducted, assaulted, raped and threatened to kill her 10 days after the fatal fire.

Her statements to police and later testimony were important to the murder case.

"I'm relieved," she said of the verdict. "I know he'll probably make me go through another

trial, but that will just add another 20 years (to his six life sentences)."

Cayce's reaction was much different.

In the courtroom he spoke civilly to Judge Barry Howard when asking that his phone privileges be reinstated. They had been taken away by 47th District Judge Maria Parker after Cayce called a witness from his cell.

Judge Howard denied the request.

After the judge and jury had left, Cayce threatened his former girlfriend.

"I'm coming for you," he said while being led out of court by sheriff's deputies.

She wasn't surprised by the remark.

"I knew he would say something," she said. "He just likes to make everyone's life hell."

Cayce had threatened the woman's brother, saying "you're next" after the preliminary exam in February and then proclaiming his innocence outside the courtroom.

The other man accused in the double murder, George Tyrone Davis, 24, of Westland, still awaits his trial on the same charges. But Cayce's conviction is some comfort for the victims' family.

"He was the main player," Joe Bovaiv said, adding, "I plan to be back for the other trial."

Jury from page A1

through the charges."

The juror said he hadn't realized that the house he drove by every day to work with the blue tarp on its roof had been the one severely damaged in the deadly blaze of Dec. 18-19, 1995.

"It was very businesslike," he said of the deliberations. "There was nobody in doubt."

Cayce and George Tyrone Davis, were both charged with first-degree murder, felony murder and arson after the mother and daughter were found inside their burning house in the early morning hours of Dec. 19. Davis will go on trial now that Cayce's is complete.

Defense attorney Kerry O. Phillips had tried to find enough inconsistencies in the stories of former friends of Cayce, who he had told about the murder.

On Thursday, Phillips asked a 16-year-old former friend of Cayce about his role in giving the killer a gas container that was used in the arson. The boy said he saw Davis and another man, but did not see Cayce in the car and waived it into the driveway with a hand gesture.

Another prosecution witness, Gerren Ratliffe, 26, said he alone had been with Cayce when they drove to the youth's Farmington Hills house to pick up the gas can and the boy waived them on by and not into the driveway.

Another prosecution witness, Mali Harrison, 21, had testified that Cayce had told her of the murders and arson about 10 days later after also telling her about abducting, raping and threatening his former girlfriend, who was a close friend of Melissa Bovaiv.

"He told me, 'I'm responsible for that,'" Harrison said.

But Phillips focused in on jewelry that had been stolen during from the Bovaiv household and asked why police had found it in Harrison's car. She said it had been given to her earlier as a gift by Cayce and she did not know it was stolen.

During his closing argument Friday morning, Phillips reminded jurors that they had sworn to acquit if they had a reasonable doubt.

"Much of the evidence is not challenged," Phillips said, adding that he agreed that an arson killed the two women and property was stolen. "That's uncontested."

Phillips questioned the lack of fingerprints on a TV, VCR and car. He agreed that an arson killed the two women and property was stolen. "That's uncontested."

"She (Harrison) admits that she had received stolen property, but doesn't know how it got into her car," he said.

The seven women and five men jurors were more impressed by the "abundant" evidence offered by assistant Oakland County Prosecutor Lisa Madzia.

"The testimony has been consistent," she told the jurors. "You've seen evidence of the fire, testimony from Dr. (Mark) Fischione (medical examiner), and testimony that is consistent."



FILE PHOTO

Quick case: Evidence against Arthur Cayce, above, was abundant, according to the prosecutor.

The juror who spoke said he thought the forewoman's emotions during the reading of the verdict were spurred by the family's reaction when the first "guilty" was read.

"I was glad that we did not have to see pictures of the bodies of the victims," he said.

Cayce, who faces six mandatory life sentences for the murders of the two women, will be sentenced at 10:30 a.m. Dec. 23. He will also be sentenced for the arson and for being a habitual criminal. He had been convicted of two break-ins in 1990 and of a felony drug charge in 1993.

Cayce also faces charges of first-degree criminal sexual conduct, attempted murder, abduction and assault in January.

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