

Shiffer, (919) 956-2410,

Charles Jeffries,
rver.com.

Triangle

WAKE: Wake editor Tom Ferriter, (919) 829-4559,
tferrite@newsobserver.com.

JOHNSTON: Growth editor Jane Ruffin, (919) 829-4570,
jruffin@newsobserver.com

Jury acquits defendant in killing

A witness's credibility becomes questionable after he becomes hesitant to cooperate.

By BENJAMIN NIOLET
STAFF WRITER

DURHAM — There was a time when Tony Taylor was going to

help the police solve a murder. The cops wired him with a hidden microphone and handed him \$275 to buy the gun he said his friend used to kill Kenneth Emanuel Holder in a public housing complex.

Instead, Taylor stole the cash and tossed the microphone. He later turned himself in and served a sentence for larceny. Still, pros-

ecutors thought Taylor, 25, was their best witness in their murder and firearm possession case against William Joseph Johnson, 25, of 512 Lakeland Str.

He wasn't enough. A Durham County jury deliberated less than three hours before returning not guilty verdicts in Johnson's case. The judge, prosecutor and defense lawyer agreed that the case

rested entirely on the credibility of Taylor as a witness.

Early April 14, 2002, Holder was shot while he was walking on Ridgeway Avenue at the McDougald Terrace housing complex. He was pronounced dead at Duke Hospital a short while later.

Taylor testified this week that he saw the shooting. He told the

jury that he was hesitant to help police because Johnson was his best friend.

Witnesses called by Johnson's attorney, Michael Driver, contradicted some of Taylor's testimony.

Staff writer Benjamin Niolet can be reached at 956-2404 or bniolet@newsobserver.com.