

Witness discredits Bell's crime scenario

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Gunshots that killed five victims in the Anthony Bell murder case were not fired at close range, a pathologist who performs autopsies for East Baton Rouge Parish testified Thursday.

That testimony from Dr. Gilbert Corrigan of the East Baton Rouge Parish Corner's Office was a blow to Bell, who asserted in his opening statement that his wife, Erica Bell, killed four members of her family in a church on May 21, 2006, then fatally shot herself.

Corrigan testified there was no gunpowder residue found on any of the victims, including Erica Bell, which indicates that Erica Bell could not have committed suicide.

"The powder (gunpowder) didn't land on their bodies. That's a distance shot," Corrigan said in response to questions by Bell.

Bell said in his opening statement his wife killed members of her family and herself after hearing that he had been having an affair with his mother-in-law.

The third day of testimony in Bell's first-degree murder trial was also a bad day for Bell when Louisiana State Police Crime Lab DNA analyst Jeremy Dubois testified that most of the DNA found on the .38-caliber revolver used in the killings was matched to Bell.

Dubois also testified that small amounts of Erica Bell's DNA was found on both sides of the gun's grip.

When police found Erica Bell's body inside a car at a North Ardenwood apartment complex, they found the murder weapon in her right hand. But her fingers were only on the grip of the gun, according to pictures shown in court.

Bell, 27, is representing himself in his own capital murder trial. Bell fired his public defenders in February and requested to represent himself.

Prosecutors Mark Dumaine and Aaron Brooks are seeking the death penalty.

Bell is charged with five counts of first-degree murder and one count of attempted first-degree murder.

Bell is accused of shooting four of his in-laws at the Ministry of Jesus Christ Church on Dallas Drive,

