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Jury hears statement in woman's death
Gunman says shooting during argument was an accident.

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Just after firing the bullet that killed his girlfriend, Sean Woodard sat in a police station cubicle for nearly three hours last year, crying and insisting the shooting was an accident.

Woodard's statement from that interrogation was read Wednesday during the second day of testimony in the 29-year-old's murder trial in the shooting death of his live-in girlfriend, Andrea Rodriguez.

In the statement, Woodard claimed he was arguing with Rodriguez, 19, as the two traveled home from a party during the early hours of July 28, 2002.

Woodard said he pulled out a gun he believed was empty and pointed it at his girlfriend during the argument. Woodard, who was drinking at the party, was angry because Rodriguez made him drive, he said.

"I was pointing it at her just to scare her," his statement said. "She told me, 'Be careful, there still might be (a bullet) in the chamber.' And then the gun went off."

Woodard's statement is perhaps the closest picture the jury will have of what exactly happened inside the car that morning.

The jury must decide if he intended to shoot his girlfriend. Rodriguez's 3-year-old daughter also was hit, but not seriously injured, by the same bullet.

On Wednesday, police investigator Gilbert Gonzalez testified that he sat in front of a computer and typed Woodard's statement.

During a heated cross-examination by defense attorney Pat Hancock, Gonzalez acknowledged that his prisoner cried off and on during the interrogation, looked remorseful and insisted he was just "playing around" with the gun.

Hancock then tried to raise doubts over the accuracy of the statement by questioning how three hours worth of interrogation amounted to only a 29-line statement in which the word "accident" or "remorseful" never appears.

He further blasted the Police Department for not videotaping the interrogation or letting his client write the confession himself. The detective said it was not police procedure to do so.

Testimony is scheduled to resume today in District Judge Sharon MacRae's third-floor courtroom at the Cadena-Reeves Justice Center. The jury could begin deliberating the case as early as this afternoon.

If convicted, Woodard could face up to 99 years in prison.

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