

KING, ERNIE  
(MURDER)

# ✓ Spedding jury out fourth day

By MARK BERGSTROM

Sentinel staff writer

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SANTA CRUZ — A. Superior Court jury deliberated a fourth day Tuesday without reaching a verdict in the Robert Spedding murder trial.

Spedding, 30, a summit-area construction worker, is accused of ordering Ernie King to jump to his death from a fast-moving pickup truck after trying to rob King on June 24, 1988. He is charged with murder.

King, 38, of Live Oak was a graduate student at San Jose State University. He was married with two young sons.

Jurors spent most of the day Tuesday again having the court reporter read back testimony from witnesses at the trial.

Questions sent out from the jury room to the court room late in the day seemed to indicate that most of the deliberation centered on an allegation that the killing was motivated by a robbery attempt.

Under the felony-murder rule, Spedding could be found guilty of first-degree murder if the jury finds that King died as the result of the robbery try. A killing does not have to be premeditated or deliberate for the felony-murder rule to apply.

Superior Court Judge Bill Kelsay tried to answer one of the jury's questions by giving them the following example:

He said that if a robber enters a liquor store, pulls a gun and demands money and the clerk's reaction is to run out of the store and into the street where he is struck and killed by a car, the robber could be found guilty of first-degree murder.