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## IRMO MAN NOT GUILTY OF CONTRACT KILLING HIT MAN IMPLICATED HIS CHILDHOOD FRIEND

*LISA GREENE, Staff Writer*

An Irmo man was found not guilty of murder by a Lexington County jury Tuesday.

Henry Irving Corley, 34, was charged with hiring a man to kill Dana Williams, 26, almost seven years ago.

When Corley was charged in 1990, police said he arranged the killing because he didn't want to give Williams money he owed her for drugs. During the trial, prosecutors alleged that Corley hired the killer because Williams was pregnant with his baby. The gunman, Casper Wendell Martin, a childhood friend of Corley's, pleaded guilty in January 1992 to shooting Williams and is serving a life sentence. He testified that Corley hired him.

Corley's lawyer, **Jack Swerling**, told jurors that Corley and Williams, who both were married to other people, had not had an affair.

Prosecutors introduced evidence showing that Williams had stopped by Corley's workplace the day before she was killed. But **Swerling** said Corley had tried to call Williams' husband just after the visit, proving they weren't hiding anything -- such as an affair -- from him.

Also, several defense witnesses testified that Corley was with them from 10 a.m. to after 5 p.m. on the day of the killing.

Eleventh Circuit Deputy Solicitor Knox McMahon said he was disappointed with the verdict but understood how the jury could reach it.

"It's very difficult for a jury to return a guilty verdict based on the testimony of a trigger man" when no physical evidence linked Corley to the crime, McMahon said.

**Swerling** said Corley used to drive a truck for BellSouth, but lost that job after being charged with murder.

"He's been doing part-time work, but he's hoping he can go back to a normal life," **Swerling** said. "He's a very happy young man."

