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Jonathan Thomas Picked By Eyewitness In Donzell Rogers Brooklyn House Party Murder

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Saquan Dixon was dancing in the backyard at a crowded party in Brooklyn, N.Y., last June when the festivities suddenly turned nightmarish.

A man who was slapped in the face stumbled into Dixon, then pulled out a handgun and started shooting in the direction of his attacker. Dixon took a round in the leg. Another young man, Donzell Rogers, was shot in his side. The bullet pierced Rogers' heart, killing him.

From the witness stand in Brooklyn court on Thursday, Dixon identified Jonathan Thomas, 20, as the shooter.

"He was just shooting wild," Dixon, 20, testified. "I thought I was going to die."

"He was so drunk he didn't care where he was shooting," he said.

Thomas is on trial on charges of murdering Rogers and injuring several bystanders at the party. Dixon picked Thomas out of a five-person lineup last year and reaffirmed his choice in court. Thomas's attorneys have maintained their client is an innocent victim of mistaken identification.

"That guy right there, I saw him," Dixon said, gesturing to Thomas, who bowed his head slightly. "I didn't see nobody in front of me."

On cross-examination, defense attorney Andrew Friedman questioned whether Dixon -- who admitted smoking marijuana on and off for nine hours leading up to the the shooting -- was sober enough to make a clear identification. Friedman also questioned Dixon about discrepancies in his statements to police, but Dixon said his story was consistent, and that the police had made errors in their notes.

Dixon did admit uncertainty about parts of his story. "I'm still trying to figure things out," he responded to one of Friedman's questions. Following Dixon's testimony, Friedman said the eyewitness was "mistaken."

Prosecutors have been unable to identify the person who slapped Thomas, allegedly sparking the drunken gunplay. A .40-caliber semi-automatic was found on one of three men caught fleeing the shooting. Police also found a 9 mm handgun under a bush.

Members of Rogers' family declined to comment, as did those who crowded the courtroom to support Thomas.

Thomas' murder trial comes during a summer in which New York City shootings have increased 12 percent from last year, with gun-wielding males as young as 17 injuring dozens of bystanders in public shootouts. Four-year-

old [Lloyd Morgan](#) was killed by a stray bullet in July after shots were fired on a basketball court in the Bronx. Bullet fragments hit 3-year-old [Isaiah Rivera](#) in the leg while he was playing in front of his Bedford-Stuyvesant apartment in Brooklyn.

On Monday, [four more were hurt](#) in an early evening shooting on a basketball court less than two miles from the brownstone where Dixon said Thomas shot at him.

Thomas' trial continues tomorrow. He faces up to 25 years in prison if convicted.