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By JAMES W. WADE III

Staff Reporter

CLEVELAND – The trial of accused serial killer Anthony Sowell got underway on Monday afternoon after jurors visited the home where the murders Sowell is accused of committing allegedly took place.

Sowell, 51, is charged with multiple counts of aggravated murder, kidnapping, abusing a corpse and tampering with evidence. He faces the death penalty if convicted, and his trial is expected to take months with as many as 132 witnesses testifying.

While the media stood outside of the Imperial Ave home, jurors came up in 3 vans and entered the house . The jurors came to the house to get a first hand look at the locations where human body parts were found.

Judge Dick Ambrose was at the house and shared with the media the importance of the condition of the house.

A photographer who was in the house for the jury's view says the inside of the house appears to be trashed. The walls are knocked out, clothing litters rooms and part of a ceiling is falling.

It wasn't clear if the holes came from police searching the house or how Sowell was living. He shared how jurors had to walk over piles of clothes and a women's shoe was on top of a microwave.

The trial started once everyone got back to the Justice Center Monday with Assistant Cuyahoga County prosecutor Rick Bombik who spoke first. "The case you're about to listen to you is one you will never forget. It will be burned into your memories as long as you live," said Bombik. "You're about to enter a very disturbing journey. We will begin to speak about the unspeakable."

Bombik told jurors that they will see hour's worth of police interviews with Anthony Sowell. Bombik told jurors the interviews get heated at times. Bombik stressed that jurors will see Sowell's reaction when authorities told him they found bodies at his house.

Defense attorney John Parker then began his opening statements. "There is not significant scientific evidence linking Mr. Sowell to the homicides," said Parker. "That crime scene was very poorly handled and that may have impacted or may not have. That's up for you to decide the evidence you'll see in the courtroom. "Parker added, "At the end of the day, you'll find Mr. Sowell not guilty of these kidnappings, these murders."

Day 2 of the trial the first witness called to the stand was the 65-year-old step brother Thomas Sowell, whose father Thomas, lived in the house on 12205 Imperial Ave. The judge has

instructed the media not to record his testimony. As assistant county prosecutor Rick Bombik questions Thomas Sowell, Anthony Sowell has mouthed the answers to a few of the questions.

Thomas Sowell said his father had a child outside of marriage, resulting in the birth of Anthony. His father was married multiple times and lived in the house with his wife, Sojourna, until he died in 2003. She passed away in 2009.

The state's next witness was 88-year-old Virginia Oliver. She is Sojourna Sowell's mother.

The afternoon session started, as Assistant Prosecutor questioned a tearful Lori Frazier, niece of Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson. Frazier said the two of them met on July 7, 2005 and the two went to an area bar for a few drinks. She said Anthony Sowell seemed like a nice guy.

"When we first got together, everything was going fine. It was real nice," Frazier said. Sowell would cook for her and she eventually moved into the third floor of Sowell's house.

“Tony (as she referred to Sowell) used to tell me that it was Sojourna. She was real sick and the gauze would fall out, and I thought it was her," Frazier said about the smell. "Then I thought it was Ray's Sausage."

Frazier admitted that she was smoking crack at the time she met Sowell, but he was not using any kind of drugs. Soon after, he started smoking crack, she said.

She said they used to do a lot of things together, like shopping and going to the park. Sowell sat with his chin rested on his hand, leaning on the table in front of him. In 2006, Frazier said Sowell started acting "real nasty" and that's when she left.

While on the stand she told Carr, she would visit Sowell after their relationship ended. One time she noticed a gash on his head and asked what happened. Frazier said there was blood on the carpet and other things in the apartment, but Sowell said someone tried to rob him.

Another time, she said "his neck was stripped down to the white meat." On another occasion, Sowell's throat was cut and he had to get stitches, Frazier said.

Defense attorney John Parker questioned Frazier. She told him she lost her children because of her drug use. Day two ended after a long afternoon of questioning of Frazier.