

# Moyes was 'perfect accomplice,' court hears

'Evil' man was hired by Ciancio to kill, prosecution argues

BY SHANNON KARI, VANCOUVER

Salvatore Ciancio asked Robert Moyes to murder a suspected police informant in 1995 because Mr. Moyes is an "evil and despicable" person, a B.C. Supreme Court judge heard yesterday.

"Those characteristics made Mr. Moyes the perfect accomplice," said prosecutor Michael Shapray during closing arguments at the first-degree murder trial.

Mr. Ciancio, 43, is accused of hiring Mr. Moyes and another man to kill Eugene Uyeyama, an alleged former cocaine-trafficking associate, who became an RCMP informant in the fall of 1995. Mr. Uyeyama and his wife, Michele, were killed in their home in Burnaby and their bodies were set on fire.



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"The Crown's theory is that Robert Moyes and Michael Samardzich brutally and viciously murdered Eugene and Michele Uyeyama," Mr. Shapray said.

Mr. Moyes testified earlier in the trial that he killed Mr. Uyeyama and Mr. Samardzich strangled his wife.

Ms. Uyeyama was not supposed to be killed, but she was unexpectedly home.

The career criminal, who pleaded guilty to a total of seven murders in 2002, testified that both Mr. Ciancio and Peter Chee, partners in an auto-body shop on Clark



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Salvatore Ciancio, above, is on trial for first-degree murder in the killing of alleged RCMP informant Eugene Uyeyama and his wife, Michele, in 1995.

Drive in east Vancouver, ordered the execution of Mr. Uyeyama.

The auto-body shop was a "front" for illegal activity, Mr. Shapray said.

Murder charges were filed against Mr. Samardzich and Mr. Chee in 2003, but were stayed by the Crown a year later.

The defence stated in its closing arguments that the testimony of Mr. Moyes should not be believed and that comments made by Mr. Ciancio in a 2002 police undercover operation were vague and did not prove his involvement in the murders. "A reasonable theory is that Peter Chee hired Robert Moyes to kill Eugene Uyeyama," said defence lawyer Simon Buck.

That suggestion was contested by the prosecution. "Taken as a whole, the evidence in this case supports only one logical conclusion," Mr. Shapray said. "Mr. Ciancio organized two of his criminal associates to carry out the killings."

Madam Justice Mary Ellen Boyd, who is trying the case without a jury, heard that Mr. Uyeyama was arrested by the RCMP in September of 1995, after the seizure of more than 305 kilograms of cocaine worth more than \$11-million.

He was released a few hours later without a charge and became an informant. The court heard that information provided by Mr. Uyeyama

led to the seizure of 20 per cent of all the cocaine recovered by the RCMP in Canada that year.

The quick release of Mr. Uyeyama is why his alleged drug associates suspected he was an informant, Mr. Shapray said.

The investigation into the murders was stalled until Mr. Moyes approached police in 2000 and confessed to the killings and implicated Mr. Ciancio and others.

The defence argued that statements Mr. Ciancio made about the Uyeyama murders to police in the 2002 "Mr. Big" sting operation, were embellishments and the information came from a Maclean's cover story about the case.

"The Maclean's magazine article is a red herring," Mr. Shapray said. "Mr. Ciancio's knowledge comes from his involvement in a high-level drug-trafficking ring that was the genesis of the murders."

Closing arguments should conclude on Tuesday. Judge Boyd is expected to render a verdict later this month.