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Man Held In Killing At Club Suspect Was In Jail Till 3 Weeks Before

by Dave Racher, Daily News Staff Writer

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There was a lot of smirking going on in court yesterday.

Accused killer Nicodemo "Nicky Slick" DiPietro, 31, smirked at a 21-year-old former exotic dancer who was about to testify against him in a murder case.

The dancer smirked back.

Amy Smith was called to testify at DiPietro's preliminary hearing on charges that he shot and killed Tad Rice-Green, 33, inside a waterfront nightclub in the early morning of Feb. 28.

Smith said she was in Club Deco, 510 N. Front St., when DiPietro, of 16th Street and Packer Avenue, South Philadelphia, shot Green, the owner of a women's clothing store.

After DiPietro was ordered to stand trial on a general charge of murder, Municipal Judge Louis G. F. Retacco told defense lawyer A. Charles Peruto Jr., "If you file for bail, tell your client not to smile during the hearing."

DiPietro, described as a mob associate by authorities, turned to a potential witness in the courtroom and mouthed, "You better watch yourself on the street," before being led out by a sheriff's deputy.

When Assistant District Attorney Edward Cameron heard about the remark, he asked a detective to take a statement from the witness.

Smith said she had just sat down with Green when DiPietro came over to their table and began an argument.

"He came walking through the door and gets into his face," Smith said. "Who are you?" asked Green. "You don't know me. What are you talking about?"

Smith said DiPietro then "gestured," as if he was reaching for a gun, and after Smith got between the two men, he began walking away.

"He took three to five steps, turned and I saw a gun," said Smith. "He shot twice. I threw a glass and hit him in the back of his head. He ran out. Tad was lying on the ground."

Police Officer Richard Butler testified that he saw DiPietro try to pull a carjacking outside the club.

Butler said DiPietro jumped into the back seat of a car and pointed the gun at the back of the head of the driver.

Police surrounded the car and took DiPietro into custody.

Cameron told Retacco that DiPietro, who has a long criminal record, had been paroled on a robbery charge about three weeks before the killing.

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