

Store clerk says bomb defendant bought parts

By SHELLEY MURPHY

Ten days before an Oct. 28, 1991, Roslindale blast killed Boston Police Bomb Squad Officer Jeremiah J. Hurley Jr., a man charged with the bombing shopped for parts, a Radio Shack employee testified yesterday.

Dwayne Armbrister said he was able to identify Thomas Shay from mugshots four months after he purchased a toggle switch and other parts from a Radio Shack on Massachusetts Avenue in Boston because he made a memorable impression.

"His eyes were like sort of stupid looking, weird," said Armbrister, adding that the customer he claims was Shay was about 6 feet 5 and had a scar on his lip.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Special Agent Jeff Kerr testified that an enlarged mugshot of Shay indicated he had a scar on his lip back in October 1991.

Attorney Nancy Gertner, who represents Shay, has urged U.S. District Judge Rya Zobel to bar Armbrister's identification of her client at his upcoming trial on the grounds that it was flawed.

Armbrister admitted yesterday that he was unable to identify Shay from a photo spread initially, but said it was because he was grieving the recent death of his grandfather and didn't pay careful attention to the photographs.