

NEWS RELEASE



Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office
71 Monument Park
Freehold, New Jersey 07728
732/431-7160
Luis A. Valentin, Prosecutor

NEPTUNE MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO AGGRAVATED MANSLAUGHTER, FACES 10 YEARS

On March 24, 2010, Jaris Baker, 23, of Neptune, N.J., appeared in Superior Court and pled guilty to an Accusation charging him with one count of first degree Aggravated Manslaughter. Baker entered his guilty plea before Judge Anthony J. Mellaci, sitting in Freehold. Baker is scheduled to appear before Judge Mellaci for sentencing on June 25, 2010.

An Accusation is the functional equivalent of an Indictment. Under New Jersey law, every defendant who is charged with a crime has a constitutional right to have a Grand Jury review the evidence and determine whether there is probable cause for the charge. If the Grand Jury finds probable cause, the Grand Jury returns an Indictment. A defendant may waive his right to have a Grand Jury determine whether probable cause exists. In order to waive his Grand Jury rights, a defendant must first appear in Superior Court and demonstrate to a Judge that his waiver is voluntary and intelligent and made with a full understanding of his constitutional rights. If the Judge approves the waiver, the Accusation takes the place of an Indictment.

Baker entered his guilty plea pursuant to a negotiated plea agreement. Pursuant to the terms of Baker's plea agreement, the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office will recommend that Judge Mellaci sentence Baker to a State Prison term of 10 years. Pursuant to the "No Early Release Act," Baker will have to serve 85% of the sentence imposed before he can be released on parole. The plea agreement was reached after consultation with and approval from the victim's family.

The charges against Baker are the result of a shooting that took place in Neptune Township at approximately 1:00 a.m. on June 27, 2009. The investigation revealed that Jaris Baker had an altercation with the victim's brother. During the course of the altercation, Baker drew a firearm and shot the victim, who succumbed to his injuries approximately ninety minutes later at Jersey Shore University Medical Center.

Detectives from the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office and the Neptune Township Police Department investigated the shooting through the night and quickly identified Jaris Baker as the perpetrator.

Baker has been lodged at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution since June 27, 2009 in lieu of \$1,500,000 bail set by Monmouth County Superior Court Judge Thomas F. Scully.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant Prosecutor Andrew S. Fried. Baker was represented by Regina Sauter, Esquire, of Freehold, N.J.

Released: March 24, 2010