

NEWS RELEASE



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Luis A. Valentin, Prosecutor

ROCHESTER, N.Y., MAN SENTENCED TO 60 YEARS IN PRISON FOR MURDER, ATTEMPTED MURDER, IN CONNECTION WITH SHOOTING OUTSIDE OF NEPTUNE TOWNSHIP MOTEL

On March 26, 2010, David Bass, 59, of Rochester, N.Y., was sentenced to a total of 60 years in New Jersey State Prison, of which he must serve 57 years before being eligible for parole, for the murder and attempted murder of two victims at the Crystal Inn Motel in Neptune, NJ, on December 20, 2006.

On January 8, 2010, a Monmouth County jury found David Bass guilty of first degree Murder, first degree Attempted Murder, second degree Unlawful Possession of a Weapon, second degree Possession of a Weapon for an Unlawful Purpose and second degree Certain Persons Not to Have Weapons. The verdict followed a five week trial which was presided over by Monmouth County Superior Court Judge Richard W. English.

Evidence presented during the trial revealed that at approximately 4:00 a.m. on December 20, 2006, officers from the Neptune Township Police Department responded to the Crystal Inn following a "911" call in reference to shots being fired. Detectives from the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office also responded to the scene a short time later. Upon arrival, the police observed a woman, later identified as Jessica Shabazz, 19, of Asbury Park, N.J., lying face down in a pool of blood in the parking lot of the Crystal Inn with an apparent bullet wound to her back.

Testimony at the trial established that, following a verbal argument in a motel room registered to Bass, Bass brandished and pointed a firearm at Ms. Shabazz. Ms. Shabazz then ran from the room. Bass shot her in the back in the motel parking lot as she continued to run from him. Ms. Shabazz was pronounced dead at the scene at 4:16 a.m.

An autopsy performed by the Monmouth County Medical Examiner's Office determined that Ms. Shabazz died as a result of a single gunshot wound to the back.

A second individual, James Sinclair, 29, of Long Branch, N.J., was shot in the pinky finger of his right hand by Bass as Mr. Sinclair was running out of the sliding glass door of the same room with Ms. Shabazz. Ms. Shabazz and Mr. Sinclair were both unarmed. Mr. Sinclair was subsequently transported to the Jersey Shore University Medical Center where he underwent a surgical procedure which resulted in the partial amputation of the pinky finger of his right hand.

Bass was located by an Ocean Township police officer shortly after the shooting in the vicinity of a Coca-Cola distribution business which is directly across the street from the Crystal Inn Motel. A .44 caliber handgun, which Bass used in the shooting, and which Bass did not have a permit for, was found near that same business.

Prior to sentencing, Bass' attorney, Paul Edinger, Esq., moved for a new trial. That motion was denied by Judge English.

Bass was sentenced as follows: Murder, a first degree crime, 35 years in State Prison with 35 years of parole ineligibility and 5 years of parole supervision if and when he is released from prison. Unlawful Possession of a Weapon, second degree crime, 5 years in State Prison with 3 years parole ineligibility pursuant to the "Graves Act." This count runs concurrent to the other counts. Possession of a Weapon for an Unlawful Purpose, second degree crime, was merged into the Murder count. Attempted Murder, a first degree crime, 20 years in State Prison, of which he must serve 17 years before he is eligible for parole pursuant to the "No Early Release Act", and 5 years of parole supervision. This count runs consecutive to the Murder and Certain Persons counts. Certain Persons Not to Have Weapons, a second degree crime, 5 years in State Prison with 5 years of parole ineligibility. This count runs consecutive to the Murder and Attempted Murder counts.

Monmouth County Prosecutor Luis A. Valentin stated, "Bass' decision to arm himself with a handgun and to repeatedly fire that handgun at two unarmed individuals resulted in the senseless death of one person and the permanent injury of another. The sentence imposed today ensures that this dangerous individual, with no apparent regard for the law, will never again have the opportunity to engage in similar violent behavior."

The case was prosecuted by Assistant Monmouth County Prosecutors Jennifer Lipp and Gregory Schweers. Bass was represented by Paul R. Edinger, Esquire, of West Long Branch, N.J.

Released: March 26, 2010