

ESSEX COUNTY PROSECUTORS OFFICE

PRESS RELEASE



Essex County Prosecutors Office
Essex County Veterans Courthouse
Newark, New Jersey 07102
973-621-4700

CAROLYN A. MURRAY
ACTING ESSEX COUNTY PROSECUTOR
Contact: Katherine Carter
973-621-4021 (Office) 973-289-9704 (Cell)

Subject: Schoolyard Murder Defendant Receives 30 Year Sentence
Date: December 13, 2012
Category: Uncategorized
Defendant(s): Shahid Baskerville

Acting Essex County Prosecutor Carolyn A. Murray announced today that the Honorable Michael L. Ravin, J.S.C., sentenced Shahid Baskerville, 21, of Morristown to 30 years in New Jersey state prison for his role in the 2007 schoolyard robbery and triple murder of three Delaware State University students.

Terrance Aerial, 18, Dashon Harvey and Iofemi Hightower, both 20, were murdered. Natasha Aerial, 24, was shot and attacked with a machete but survived.

Assistant Prosecutor Thomas McTigue, who has handled the prosecution of all six defendants, along with Assistant Prosecutor Romesh Sukhdeo, said, "We believe a 30-year sentence is appropriate in this case because Shahid Baskerville admitted his guilt and took responsibility for his conduct."

Assistant Prosecutor Sukhdeo said the final defendant Gerardo Gomez will be sentenced on Jan. 9, 2013 at 9:30 a.m.

"We wanted both defendants to be sentenced today, so the families could go into the New Year with this behind them but the defense attorney for Mr. Gomez asked for additional time," said Sukhdeo.

On the night of August 4, 2007, Baskerville, then 15 years old, joined five men and boys in the Mount Vernon Elementary School playground in the Ivy Hill section of Newark where they surrounded, robbed and shot four friends who were hanging out in the school yard listening to music. Three of the victims—Harvey, Hightower and Terrance Aerial—were taken to a separate part of the school yard where they each were fatally shot and where Hightower was also brutalized with a machete. Natasha Aerial was attacked with a machete and shot in the head during the incident, but survived.

Baskerville, who grew up in Newark, but moved to Morristown, pleaded guilty on December 23, 2011 to robbery and sexual assault charges.

Today, Judge Ravin sentenced Baskerville to 30 years for robbery and aggravated criminal sexual contact. Under the No Early Release Act, Baskerville must serve 85 percent of his sentence before he is eligible for parole. He will also be under lifetime parole supervision when he is released from prison.

Essex County Prosecutor's Office
Newark, NJ