

NEWS

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Clementon Man Pleads Guilty in Connection with Murder of 14-year-old Lindenwold Boy

(More)

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TRENTON – A Clementon man pleaded guilty today to federal charges in connection with the shooting death of a 14-year-old boy in Lindenwold, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr. announced.

Derrick M. Jones, 29, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Joel A. Pisano to a one-count Superseding Information that charges him with use of a firearm in the furtherance of a drug trafficking crime which resulted in the death of Barry Robertson, 14, of Lindenwold. The defendant also pleaded guilty to gun charges contained in a five-count Superseding Indictment that was returned in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Virginia (“WDVA”). The WDVA Indictment was transferred to the District of New Jersey for plea purposes. Judge Pisano scheduled sentencing for Oct. 22.

At his plea hearing, Jones pleaded guilty to the District of New Jersey Information, admitting he used and discharged a Hi-Point .45 caliber semi-automatic handgun, in relation to a crack cocaine distribution conspiracy, to murder Barry Robertson.

Jones admitted that after serving five years in an N.J. Department of Corrections facility for convictions of possession with intent to distribute cocaine and illegal possession of a handgun, he returned to Lindenwold in 2005 and began selling quantities of marijuana and crack cocaine at the Arborwood apartment complex. Jones admitted he attempted to take control over all drug trafficking activity at the apartment complex and that as a result became involved in a dispute with a rival female drug dealer in July 2005. On July 25, 2005, Jones and his girlfriend were assaulted in Jones’ apartment by individuals he believed were associated with the rival female drug dealer, he stated.

After the assault, Jones traveled to Roanoke, Va., and arranged to purchase a firearm to be used in retaliation. Jones admitted that on Aug. 25, 2005, he accompanied a Virginia resident who bought him the handgun and ammunition because Jones is barred from purchasing a gun due to his prior criminal convictions.

In purchasing the firearm, Jones agreed that the Virginia resident had to fill out paperwork which required her to affirm under the penalty of perjury that she was buying the firearm for herself and not for someone else. Jones admitted that he gave the Virginia resident money to purchase the handgun and that after he was given the weapon he filed off the serial number.

Jones admitted that he returned to New Jersey with the firearm the day after it was purchased and then, over the next couple of days, displayed the gun to associates and discussed shooting the rival drug dealer.

Jones admitted that on Aug. 29, 2005, at approximately 4:25 a.m., he went to an area outside of apartment 1911 of the Arborwood apartments and shot at the apartment approximately seven times. Jones agreed that four bullets he fired penetrated the front wall and continued into the apartment. Jones admitted that one of those bullets struck and killed Robertson as he slept on a pullout sofa in the living room.

The charge contained in the District of New Jersey Information, use of a firearm in relation to a drug trafficking crime in the murder of Robinson as that murder related to the drug conspiracy, carries a maximum penalty of life, and a fine of \$250,000. Count one of the WDVA Indictment, which charges felon in possession of a firearm, carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Count Two, which charges possession of a firearm with an obliterated serial number, carries a maximum penalty of 5 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. Count Three, which charges aiding and abetting in the purchase of a firearm by providing false information to a licensed federal firearms dealer, carries a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. Count Four, charging knowingly making false statements or representations, or aiding, abetting or procuring the making of false statements or representations that are required to be kept in the records of a person licensed to purchase firearms, carries a maximum penalty of 5 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine. Count Five, charging interstate travel, carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Pisano will consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Marra thanked Acting U.S. Attorney Julia C. Dudley in the Western District of Virginia for her office's efforts in the case.

Marra credited Special Agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' Philadelphia Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Mark Potter; and the ATF's Roanoke Field Office, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Edgar Domenich, Washington Field Division; and Investigators with the Camden County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Warren W. Faulk, and Police Officers with the Lindenwold Police Department, under the direction of Chief Michael McCarthy, with the investigation.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jason Richardson and James P. Lynch of the U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Division in Camden, and Donald R. Wolthuis of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Virginia.

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Defense Attorney: Christopher O'Malley, Esq. Assistant Federal Public Defender