

NEWS

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East Orange Man Convicted of Carjacking in Which He Sexually Assaulted and Shot Victim

(More)

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NEWARK – A federal jury today convicted an East Orange man for the 2006 carjacking of a couple in East Orange, in which the defendant pistol-whipped a male victim and sexually assaulted a female victim before critically wounding her with a gunshot to the head, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Noah Cuebas, 26, a.k.a. “Rashawn Jones,” was convicted of one count of carjacking and one count of use of a firearm in the commission of a violent crime. The jury acquitted him of a second carjacking.

Under the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, Cuebas faces a potential sentence of between 312 and 385 months in federal prison. The government expects, however, to seek an even longer prison sentence based on the extreme violent nature of the conduct and injuries suffered by the victim.

“Cuebas is a truly dangerous, remorseless individual who represents a continuing threat to the public,” said Fishman. “We intend to argue for a very long prison sentence.”

“This verdict shows that although he sought to inspire fear in his victims, the behavior of people like Noah Cuebas will not be tolerated,” said Weysan Dun, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI in Newark. “The cooperation between federal, state and local authorities and the community has rendered him powerless. I congratulate the U.S. Attorney's Office and all the investigators in this case on this critical victory.”

The case was tried by Assistant U.S. Attorneys R. Joseph Gribko and Robert G. Marasco. The trial was before U.S. District Judge Joseph A. Greenaway, Jr. No sentencing date was set.

Cuebas still awaits trial in Essex County Superior Court for a number of other crimes, including two other homicides, that he allegedly committed around the time of the carjacking for which he was convicted today.

According to the charges and evidence produced at trial, a male and female were in a parked 2006 Dodge Magnum in East Orange on July 8, 2006. Wearing a hooded green army jacket and blue jeans, Cuebas approached the vehicle and pointed a .45 caliber handgun at the male victim and then pistol-whipped and beat him. Cuebas then ordered the male victim to drive the vehicle to another location in East Orange. Upon arrival at that location, Cuebas ordered the male victim to get out of the vehicle, and told the female victim to drive the vehicle. A short time later, the vehicle was found in Newark with the female victim inside suffering from a gunshot wound to the head.

The female victim, who was 22 years old at the time of the attack, testified that, as a result

of the attack, she lost brain tissue and a part of her skull and suffered a stroke. She still is in a wheelchair and is paralyzed on one side of her body.

Following his arrest on July 18, 2006, Cuebas gave a detailed confession to police. At trial, he did not contest that he committed the crimes. Cuebas and his defense did not dispute during the trial that he committed the carjackings and sought to have him found not guilty by reason of insanity. They argued that Cuebas suffered mental illness and did not understand the nature and quality or wrongfulness of his acts due to severe abuse as a child and drug abuse.

The government argued that Cuebas fully understood that what he had done was illegal and acknowledged as much from the witness stand. During commission of the crimes, Cuebas concealed his face with a bandana and wore a borrowed jacket, indicating that he knew he was breaking the law.

The carjacking for which Cuebas was acquitted allegedly occurred on July 7, 2006 and involved his taking an SUV from a cell tower repairman at gunpoint.

The federal carjacking conviction carries a maximum statutory penalty of 25 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. Possession a firearm during or in furtherance of a crime of violence carries a mandatory minimum penalty of 10 years in prison and up to life in prison plus a fine of \$250,000.

Fishman credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun, and the Essex County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Paula T. Dow, and the Police Departments of Newark, East Orange, and Rahway, with the investigation leading to the conviction.

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Defense Attorney: K. Anthony Thomas, Esq. and John Yauch, Esq., both of the federal Public Defender's Office in Newark