

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey
401 Market Street, Fourth Floor
Camden, New Jersey 08101



Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney

More Information? Contact the Assistant U.S. Attorney or other contact listed below to see if more information is available.

News on the Internet: News Releases, related documents and advisories are posted short-term at our website, along with links to our archived releases at the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. **Go to:** <http://www.njusao.org/break.html>

Assistant U.S. Attorneys
STEVEN D'AGUANNO
856-757-5011
HOWARD WIENER
856-968-4926

mine1120.rel
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Nov. 20, 2006

Four Philadelphia Men Convicted on Charges for Gloucester Township Home Invasion

(More)

Greg Reinert , PAO : 856-757-5233
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/>

Public Affairs: 973-645-2888

Breaking News (NJ) <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/publicaffairs/index.html>

CAMDEN – Four Philadelphia men were convicted by a federal jury today on conspiracy, robbery and gun charges in connection with a December 2005 home invasion robbery in which the occupants were bound with duct tape and a safe was stolen from the home, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

After four hours of deliberations, which began Nov. 17, a jury convicted Rasheen Mines, 25, William Brown, 23, Lawrence Johnson, 31, and William Hernandez, 30, on one count each of conspiracy to commit robbery, robbery, interstate travel to commit a crime of violence, conspiracy to use interstate travel to commit a crime of violence, and use of a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence. Additionally, Mines, Brown and Johnson were convicted on one count each of possession of a firearm by a previously convicted felon.

The case was tried by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Steven D'Aguanno and Howard Wiener.

During the trial, the jury heard the testimony of 15 government witnesses and viewed hundreds of pieces of evidence regarding a home invasion on Dec. 26, 2005, at a residence in the Erial section of Gloucester Township. According to testimony, upon entering the residence the intruders, at least two of whom were armed with handguns, forced the residents into a second-floor bedroom where the defendants physically restrained them by binding their hands and feet with duct tape. The victims were held hostage for approximately one hour.

In convicting the defendants, the jury found that the four defendants, after restraining the residents, stole jewelry, cellular telephones and other items from the home. After locating a large safe in the house, the defendants demanded the safe's combination from the residents, who were unable to provide the combination. The suspects then removed the safe from the residence and fled in a sport utility vehicle, according to trial testimony.

According to testimony, one of the residents was able to remove the duct tape and fled to a neighbor's house to notify police. The victim provided a description of the SUV, which was then broadcasted to other law enforcement agencies.

A Gloucester City police officer spotted an SUV matching the vehicle description, which was occupied by four males, in the vicinity of the Walt Whitman Bridge, according to testimony. The officer, joined by two other police cruisers driven by a Gloucester City police officer and a Brooklawn police officer, followed the vehicle over the bridge and attempted a vehicle stop after exiting the toll plaza. The driver of the SUV failed to pull over and a pursuit followed.

Philadelphia police joined the pursuit, which ended when the SUV crashed into a parked car. Following the crash, the four defendants fled on foot. Three of the suspects, Mines, Brown and Johnson, were apprehended following a foot pursuit. Hernandez was not apprehended or charged at the time. Law enforcement officers recovered the safe and other items belonging to the victims, along with two handguns, masks and gloves from the sport utility vehicle, according to testimony.

Count One and Two, charging conspiracy to commit robbery and robbery, each carry a maximum statutory sentence of 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. Count Three which charges interstate travel to commit a crime of violence carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. Count Four, charging conspiracy to use interstate travel to commit a crime of violence, carries a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. Count Five charging use of a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence carries a maximum penalty of life in prison and a fine of \$250,000. Each count of possession of a firearm by a previously convicted felon, carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Jerome B. Simandle 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.

Christie credited Police Officers with the Gloucester City Police Department, under the direction of Chief William Crothers; the Gloucester Township Police Department, under the direction of Chief John Stollsteimer; the Brooklawn Police Department, under the direction of Chief Francis McKinney; the Philadelphia Police Department, under the direction of Police Commissioner Sylvester Johnson; Special Agents of the FBI's Cherry Hill Resident Agency and the Philadelphia Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge J.P. Weis in Philadelphia; and the Camden County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Acting Prosecutor James P. Lynch, with the investigation leading to the Indictment.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Steven D'Aguanno and Howard Wiener of the Criminal Division in Camden.

– end –

Defense Attorneys:

Mines – James Lyons, Esq. Philadelphia

Johnson – Edward Borden, Jr., Esq. Haddon Township

Brown – Lisa Evans-Lewis AFD

Hernandez – Fortunato Perry, Jr. Philadelphia