

TRUMBULL COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

Dennis Watkins, Prosecutor
Repeat Violent Offenders newsletter
Update, Nov. 13, 2023

Jury spares Kashaun Williams of death penalty



A Trumbull County jury on Monday, November 13, 2023, recommended to Judge Ronald J. Rice to sentence convicted killer Kashaun Williams to a term of life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Judge Rice read the verdict which stated at least one juror found the aggravating circumstances of the defendant's crimes did not outweigh the mitigating factors, which saved him from a possible death penalty. The same jurors on Wednesday, November 8, 2023, found Williams, 30, of Warren, guilty of two counts of aggravated murder, attempted murder, aggravated burglary, kidnapping felonious assault, assault on a peace officer and receiving stolen property.

The jurors deliberated about three hours after hearing from three mitigating witnesses and from Williams himself in this penalty phase of the trial. Monday's hearing followed two days of testimony in the case of the slaying of James Chapman on April 2, 2023, at Chapman's home on Lener Avenue SW in Warren.

Testimony at the trial of Kashaun Williams showed Chapman was shot two times, with one bullet passing through the heart and another bullet severing the spinal cord. Chapman died within minutes of the early morning shooting on his front porch. Williams was also convicted of shooting and beating Chapman's girlfriend Martina Moore and punching a female police officer as he was being arrested.

Jurors also found Williams guilty of specifications of aggravating circumstances -- which triggered the death penalty phase -- and firearm specifications. Judge Rice also found Williams guilty of the felony of having weapons while under disability, which convicted Williams of using a gun while being a convicted felon. The judge also found that the defendant be labeled as a repeat violent offender.

Judge Rice will have the final say in Williams' prison sentence with a hearing scheduled for 1:30 p.m. Nov. 30.

At the mitigation hearing Monday, jurors learned that Williams has a violent criminal record including prior prison terms. A Cleveland area psychologist also stated that Williams had a history of marijuana use and has battled a lifelong attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD). During his unsworn statement, Williams showed no resentment toward jurors and begged them to save his life. He also told jurors he "never had an honest job" and sold marijuana and other drugs "to get by." Also testifying on the defendant's behalf were Williams' mother and sister.

Despite her hope that Williams would receive the death penalty, LaShonya Lynk, mother of James Chapman, said after the jurors' verdict: "It's still life (in prison)," and that "he's never coming home. He's going to die there; he's going to be very miserable."

Trumbull County Assistant Prosecutors Christopher Becker and Gabriel Wildman represented the state at trial, while Williams was defended by attorney Anthony Meranto and Thomas Zena.

For more information, contact Guy M. Vogrin, investigator/public information officer for the Trumbull County Prosecutor's Office at 330-675-2485