



NEWS RELEASE

Prosecutor Camelia M. Valdes
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TWO MEN FOUND GUILTY BY A JURY IN CONNECTION TO THE MAY 1, 2021 HOMICIDE IN PATERSON

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY

October 13, 2023

Passaic County Prosecutor Camelia M. Valdes announces that Jaquan Thomas, 33, of Paterson, New Jersey, and Ismael Leon, 21, of Paterson, New Jersey were found guilty this afternoon after a jury trial before the Honorable Sohail Mohammed, P.J.Cr. Thomas was found guilty of first degree Murder, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:11-3; first degree, Conspiracy to Commit Murder, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:5-2 and 2C:11-3; second degree, Possession of a Weapon for an Unlawful Purpose, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:39-4; and second degree, Unlawful Possession of a Weapon, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:39-5. Leon was found guilty of first degree, Aggravated Manslaughter, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:11-4a(1); first degree, Conspiracy to Commit Murder, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:5-2 and 2C:11-3; second degree Possession of a Weapon for an Unlawful Purpose, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:39-4; and second degree, Unlawful Possession of a Weapon, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:39-5.

Jury selection commenced on September 5, 2023. On October 13, 2023, following approximately one day of deliberations, the jury returned the guilty verdicts against both of the defendants. The jury heard evidence that on May 1, 2021, Thomas devised a plan where members of his gang would go to the area of Redwood Avenue and Totowa Avenue and begin shooting at individuals he believed were members of a rival gang. Thomas also planned that Leon, along with another member of the gang, would go to the area of Albion Avenue and Totowa Avenue and once the shooting began and individuals ran towards Albion Avenue, Leon would fire a gun at those individuals. When the shooting took place, the victim, Jose Figueroa, was struck and killed by the gun fire.

Sentencing has been scheduled for December 15, 2023 before the Honorable Sohail Mohammed, P.J.Cr. The sentencing exposure on first degree murder in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:11-3 is 30 years to Life in New Jersey State Prison, of which 85% of the sentence must be served before parole eligibility; on first degree aggravated manslaughter in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:11-4a(1), the sentencing exposure is between 10 years to 30 years in New Jersey State

Prison, of which 85% of the sentence must be served before parole eligibility; on second degree possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose and second degree unlawful possession of a weapon it is 5-10 years New Jersey State Prison of which 42 months must be served before parole eligibility, subject to the Graves Act.

Passaic County Senior Assistant Prosecutor Jonathan Barrera represented the State during the jury trial before Judge Mohammed. Thomas was represented by Laura Sutnick, Esq. and Leon was represented by Matthew Cavaliere, Esq.

For media inquiries concerning this case, please contact Senior Assistant Prosecutor Jonathan Barrera of the Passaic County Prosecutor's Office at jbarrera@passaiccountynj.org at (973) 881-4848.



Jaquan Thomas



Ismael Leon