



Orange County News

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District Attorney Hoovler announces Guilty Pleas in Halloween Party Murder Case

Defendant pleaded guilty to two counts of Murder in the Second Degree and five counts of Attempted Murder in the Second Degree

Defendant to be sentenced to 40 Years to Life in State Prison

Orange County District Attorney David M. Hoovler announced today, Nija A. Johnson, 17, of Newburgh, pleaded guilty to two counts of Murder in the Second Degree, and five counts of Attempted Murder in the Second Degree, in connection with shooting seven people who were attending a Halloween party at 119 Broadway, in the City of Newburgh, during the early morning hours of October 30, 2016. Johnson admitted he intended to kill someone he had been in a fight with when he fired a pistol at least ten times, striking seven party-goers. Two young women attending the party died as a result of the gunshot wounds inflicted by Johnson. Five other party-goers suffered serious physical injury as a result of being shot by Johnson. Johnson admitted that the only reason he ceased firing the gun, which was still loaded, was because he had been forcibly disarmed by another person attending the party. The pistol which Johnson used, a .40 caliber pistol with an extended magazine designed to hold 20 rounds, was recovered behind 119 Broadway.

Under the terms of the plea agreement placed on the record at the time Johnson pleaded guilty, the District Attorney will be recommending a combined sentence of 40 years to Life when Johnson is sentenced by Orange County Court Judge Craig Stephen Brown on April 20, 2017.

District Attorney Hoovler thanked the City of Newburgh Police Department, the New York State Police Major Crimes Unit, and Federal Bureau of Investigation for their investigation of this case.

The case is being prosecuted by Chief Assistant District Attorney Christopher Borek and Assistant District Attorney Michael Purcell.

“The loss of two innocent young women’s lives, and the serious injuries suffered by five other young people caused by this defendant’s senseless shooting is almost incomprehensible,” said District Attorney. “The climate which gives rise to some tolerating, or even encouraging, this type of senseless violence must stop. My office, and our law enforcement partners, will investigate and prosecute all who are associated in any way with this type of violence.”

A criminal charge is merely an allegation that a defendant has committed a violation of the criminal law, and it is not evidence of guilt. All defendants are presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial, during which it will be the State of New York’s burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

