



Orange County News

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District Attorney Hoovler announces Sentence in Halloween Party Murder Case

Defendant sentenced to 40 Years to Life in State Prison

*Defendant had pled guilty to two counts of Murder in the Second Degree
and five counts of Attempted Murder in the Second Degree*

Orange County District Attorney David M. Hoovler announced today, Nija A. Johnson, 18, of Newburgh, was sentenced to multiple state prison sentences, totaling 40 years to Life, for shooting seven people attending a Halloween party at 119 Broadway, in the City of Newburgh, during the early morning hours of October 30, 2016. On February 16, 2017, Johnson pleaded guilty to two counts of Murder in the Second Degree, and five counts of Attempted Murder in the Second Degree, in connection with the shootings. Johnson was sentenced by Orange County Court Judge Craig Stephen Brown to 20 years to Life in state prison on each of the two counts of Murder in the Second Degree and ordered that those sentences run consecutively. Johnson was sentenced to 25 years in state prison, and five years post-release supervision, on each of the five counts of Attempted Murder in the Second Degree and those sentences were ordered to run concurrently with each other and the Murder sentences. Johnson will be eligible for parole after serving 40 years in prison, and may never be granted parole.

Johnson, who was 17 years old at the time of the murders, had admitted that 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. One victim is now wheelchair bound and another still has bullet fragments in him. 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.

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 was prosecuted by Chief Assistant District Attorney Christopher Borek and Assistant District Attorney Michael Purcell.

“This defendant will likely remain a threat to society even after serving four decades in prison, and hopefully the Parole Board will carefully consider whether he ever should be released,” said District Attorney Hoovler. “The loss of two innocent young women’s lives, and the serious, and in some cases life-altering, injuries suffered by five other young people caused by these senseless shootings is almost incomprehensible. It is truly chilling that the defendant sought to explain his behavior by telling an officer that, ‘Nobody fights anymore. We use our guns to settle things.’ 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.”

