

PRESS RELEASE

LAST OF MULTIPLE INDIVIDUALS SENTENCED FOR FEDERAL KIDNAPPING CONVICTION

Friday, August 22, 2025

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Michigan

DETROIT – Semaj Ayers, 23, of Detroit was sentenced yesterday to 110 months in federal prison following a conviction for federal kidnapping, United States Attorney Jerome F. Gorgon, Jr. announced today.

Gorgon was joined in the announcement by Special Agent in Charge James M. Deir of the ATF in Michigan.

Semaj Ayers entered a guilty plea to kidnapping on March 18, 2025. In total seven people were charged with conspiracy to kidnap and kidnapping from this incident. Six people have been convicted. Cortez Blake, 23, and Nasir Lewis, 24, were convicted of kidnapping at trial, while Maijah Greene, 24, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to kidnap; Shatonna Kimbrough, 21, Armond Williams, 22, and Ayers pleaded guilty to kidnapping. The final defendant, Karamoh Turner, was acquitted at trial.

During the trial of Blake and Lewis, the jury heard evidence that the defendants worked with others to kidnap and beat their victim. The kidnappers wrongly believed the victim took part in a carjacking and the kidnapping was to retaliate and extract information from the victim. According to the testimony, a group of armed men took the victim from Sinai-Grace Hospital. The kidnappers first drove the victim to an empty lot in Detroit where the victim was beaten. The kidnappers then took the victim to a residence controlled by Blake, where the victim was held at gunpoint and beaten intermittently for hours. Finally, the victim was abandoned miles away on the roadside.

At trial, the government proved that the victim was held against her will at gunpoint in a house in Detroit where she was physically beaten. This was done in part to get information from her. Cellphones were used to recruit and direct others to join the kidnapping of the victim.

Two additional people were convicted of the carjacking that precipitated the kidnapping. Jamar Lee-Stinson pleaded guilty to carjacking and discharging a firearm during a crime of violence and was sentenced to 141 months in prison in May 2024. Amiaya Bryant also pleaded guilty to carjacking and discharging a firearm during a crime of violence and was sentenced to 120 months in prison in June 2024.

“Gang violence destroys the ability of innocent people in our community to simply go about their business. These defendants tried to take vengeance against another group and committed horrible violent crimes. And they kidnapped the wrong person to boot,” said U.S. Attorney Gorgon. “We will do everything in our power to end this violence. The sentences imposed here—and the prosecutions we are bringing—are just the beginning.”

“Pure and simple, Ayers and his accomplices are predators who failed. They represent the worst of the worst in our community. They wrongfully imprisoned and tortured a member of our community. ATF is the federal violent crime police, and we are relentless in holding violent offenders accountable for their poor choices,” said ATF Detroit Special Agent in Charge James Deir. “In the end, Ayers should pack his bags and prepare to be reunited with his buddies as they seek redemption in federal prison for a long time.”

The United States Attorney’s Office and the ATF are focused on prosecuting those individuals who are using firearms to commit violent acts against people in the Eastern District of Michigan. The strategy is a part of the United States Attorney’s Office’s Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) initiative. PSN continues to be the centerpiece of the Department of Justice’s violent crime reduction efforts. Through PSN, a broad spectrum of stakeholders works together to identify the most pressing violent crime problems and develop comprehensive solutions to address them. PSN is an evidence-based program that focuses enforcement efforts on the most violent offenders and partners with locally based prevention and reentry programs to pursue lasting reductions in crime.

These charges are just some of the tangible results of this joint effort. The United States Attorney’s Office and our law enforcement partners will continue to work together to reduce violence in our communities. Along with ATF, this case has been investigated with the assistance of the Office of Inspector General – U.S. Department of Labor, the United States Marshals Service, the Detroit Police Department’s Gang Intelligence Unit, and the Michigan Department of Corrections.

Updated August 22, 2025

Topic**VIOLENT CRIME**

Component

[USAO - Michigan, Eastern](#)