

PRESS RELEASE

TWO MEN CONVICTED OF FEDERAL KIDNAPPING

Tuesday, August 13, 2024

For Immediate Release

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

DETROIT – Cortez Blake, 23, and Nasir Lewis, 24, both from Detroit, were convicted of kidnapping by a federal jury yesterday, United States Attorney Dawn N. Ison announced. Ison was joined in the announced by Special Agent in Charge James M. Deir of the ATF in Michigan. The convictions followed an eight-day jury trial before United States District Judge Laurie J. Michelson.

During the trial, the jury heard evidence that the defendants worked with others to kidnap and beat their victim. The kidnapers 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 kidnapers first drove the victim to an empty lot in Detroit where the victim was beaten. The kidnapers 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.

Seven people were charged with conspiracy to kidnap and kidnapping from this incident. With today's verdicts, five people have been convicted. In addition to Blake and Lewis, Maijah Greene, 24, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to kidnap; Shatonna Kimbrough, 21, pleaded guilty to kidnapping; and Armond Williams, 22, pleaded guilty to kidnapping.

The trial of a sixth individual, Semaj Ayers, remains pending.

The final defendant, Karamoh Turner, was acquitted at trial. Turner still faces charges of aggravated identity theft and wire fraud in federal court.

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

All of the defendants remain in custody. Each of the defendants convicted of kidnapping or conspiracy to kidnap face up to life in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and not more than 5 years of supervised release.

“So often, one terrible crime spins into a cycle of violence and retribution. And too often, those cycles end tragically—with death, injury, and incarceration. We will continue to try to prevent violent crime in the first place, and my office is also committed to trying to interrupt cycles of violence before they spin out of control. So let me say clearly, if you are victimized, let us do our job and settle it in the courtroom. Because if you retaliate, these verdicts should make clear that we will use every tool we have to seek justice,” said U.S. Attorney Ison.

“Cortez Blake and Nasir Lewis represent the “worst of the worst” offenders calling Detroit home. There is no excuse for what they did. They kidnapped and beat a citizen of Detroit with an illegal firearm. They are common-day thugs who put their gang membership and loyalty above everything else, including their humanity. In my experience, these folks represent the most deserving candidates for federal prosecution. ATF and our law enforcement partners remain resolute in holding violent gang members who terrorize our community members accountable for gun violence,” said ATF Special Agent in Charge James Deir.

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 13, 2024

Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

Component

[USAO - Michigan, Eastern](#)