

Defendants Face Prison Time for Murder and Weapons Charges

Prosecutors within the Delaware Department of Justice recently obtained significant convictions and sentences.

A 31-year-old Wilmington man will spend 21 years in prison after being sentenced for Murder Second Degree, Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony, and a Violation of Probation. Deputy Attorneys General Periann Doko and Colleen Norris secured the sentence for Sidney Sessoms. Following an argument in August 2014, Sessoms fired a gun at a group of people in the area of East 13th and North Claymont streets in Wilmington, hitting and killing 34-year-old Terence Purnell of Wilmington.

Deputy Attorney General Lindsay Taylor obtained a conviction for William Bessicks, 30, of Magnolia for Possession of a Firearm by a Person Prohibited, and Possession of Ammunition by a Person Prohibited. In April 2015, members of Delaware State Police Kent County Drug Unit, Governor's Task Force, and Special Operations Response Team (SORT), executed a search warrant at Bessicks's home on Terry Drive in Magnolia regarding a drug investigations of sales of crack cocaine. While searching the home, officers found a loaded .22 caliber handgun, and a small box of ammunition. Bessicks, whose previous robbery conviction makes him unable to have a gun, faces a mandatory minimum sentence of five years in prison.

Deputy Attorney General Zach George handled the case of 25-year-old Ezekiel Benson of Dover, convicted of Possession of a Firearm by a Person Prohibited, and Carrying a Concealed Deadly Weapon. Acting on a tip in April 2015 that Benson would be in possession of a gun, police conducted a surveillance.

After seeing Benson enter a home in the 300 block of West Division Street in Dover, they found him with a loaded 9mm semi-automatic handgun in his waist band, and another loaded 9mm magazine. Benson was sentenced by the court to five years in prison, followed by one year of Level III probation.