

Waldorf man sentenced to 18 months for armed robbery

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La Plata, MD - For one young Waldorf man, the lesson of painful consequences from foolish choices will be one he will have to think about for a while.

Robert Jermaine Johnson, 18, was one of three men arrested for the armed robbery of two young men on a footpath through a residential area of Waldorf Oct. 18, 2013. He was a minor at the time of the offense.

Johnson was sentenced to 33 years with all but 18 months suspended, by Charles County Circuit Court Judge Helen I. Harrington Wednesday, Jan. 14 in La Plata. The sentence is to be served in the Charles County Detention Center,

Charles County Assistant State's Attorney Francis J. Granados told Harrington and newly elected Charles County Circuit Court Judge Thomas R. Simpson Jr. that he was not looking to send Johnson to the Maryland Department of Corrections at such a young age, but did feel that a year and a half of active local time was merited in this case.

Granados presented and read impact statements from the two victims and one of the victim's mother outlining the psychological impact of the event on the two young men who were robbed of tennis shoes, wallets and cell phones in the 2013 robbery at gunpoint.

One victim said he had to see a neurologist for persistent headaches since the robbery and both complained of inability to concentrate on school work.

Both said they feared going out in the community as a result of the attack.

The mother of one victim said her son "lost his innocence" because of the incident.

"The gun turned out to be a BB gun," Granados said, "but one of the victims testified that it looked like a real gun."

Granados also said police found the weapon used in the robbery in Johnson's bedroom when they executed a search warrant on his parent's Waldorf residence.

"Mr. Johnson took a lot more than shoes, wallets and phones," he said. "They robbed these young men of their security. They are afraid to go out in their own neighborhood. Children and adults shouldn't have to live that way. They made the victim want to go out and react the same way. That just creates a cycle of violence."

Granados added that while this type of behavior is becoming more prevalent in Charles County, he was asking for 18 months locally, "and when he's done, we hope he will pivot from ever doing something like this in the future. We're hoping significant punishment now will be enough."

Johnson's attorney, Sabrina Richardson, said it was her understanding from the police report that there were no injuries during the robbery.

"Now it's my understanding that one of the victims has headaches," she said.

Harrington said she would rule on medical bills incurred by the one victim at a later date, but added that Johnson would have to pay \$699 to one of the victims as ordered by the court.

Richardson asked Harrington to sentence Johnson "on the bottom of the guidelines because of his young age.

"Even though he wasn't wielding the BB gun, he was there," she said.

"I heard that you yourself had been the victim of a robbery," Harrington told Johnson. "What I don't understand how you could be a victim of a robbery and then turn around and rob someone else?"

When Johnson failed to respond, the judge told him, "each of these charges carry 15 years."

Harrington then imposed her sentence of 33 years, all but 18 months suspended, to be served at the Charles County Detention Center, adding five years of supervised probation.

"It's a shame your foolishness has led you to this point," she said.

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