

St. Mary's teen sentenced to 15 years for shooting incident

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Nicholas B. Osborne

Leonardtown, MD - A St. Mary's County teenager who admitted to firing a gun into an occupied house in retaliation for being assaulted during a drug deal was sentenced Monday, March 4 in Circuit Court. The defendant, Nicholas B. Osborne, 19 of California, received a 35-year sentence from Judge David Densford, who suspended all but 15 years. Densford ruled that Osborne must serve the first five years in a maximum-security facility and will not be eligible for parole during that period.

Osborne will have five years of supervised probation upon his release. Densford stated that the defendant has drug and psychological problems that can be dealt with in the confines of a Department of Corrections facility, adding that the public is presently not safe with Osborne not in custody. "This young man needs all the help he can get," said Densford.

The charges against Osborne stem from two incidents, one that occurred Dec. 16, 2017 and the second that occurred Feb. 20, 2018 at a residence on Mary Helen Lane in Leonardtown. In that incident, Osborne spray-painted a Chevrolet Impala parked outside the residence and then fired several shots into the occupied house, nearly hitting one of the three occupants. Deputy Daniel Holdsworth of the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office stated in court documents that when police arrived at the house after receiving reports of the shooting they located Osborne a short distance from where the incident occurred. His vehicle was also located. The defendant had green paint on his fingers matching that which was spray-painted on the Impala. He was also in possession of brass knuckles. A handgun was located near the scene as well. Osborne was arrested and has remained in custody on a no-bond status since his apprehension.

The defendant was facing, among other charges, three counts of attempted first-degree murder. He subsequently pleaded guilty to single counts of first-degree assault and handgun on person. He pleaded guilty to controlled dangerous substance possession with a firearm in connection with the earlier case.

In making the state's case for a maximum sentence, Assistant State's Attorney Julie White described Osborne as "old enough to know better, too young to care." White noted that the defendant has been using and selling drugs since he was a high school sophomore. The prosecutor said Osborne has not made diligent efforts to get drug treatment and help for his mental issues. She also stated the defendant has had access to many guns.

Osborne's attorney, Hammad Matin, said of his client's actions, "his intent was not to kill a man." Matin acknowledged that Osborne has drug and mental health issues but added that after having conversations with him, concluded, "this is one guy I would not be afraid of." Matin also noted his client has obtained his high school diploma since his incarceration.

One of the occupants of the home on the night of the shooting called the February 2018 incident "a horrifying ordeal."

"We love our son very much," said Bruce Osborne, the defendant's father. "This is not who Nick is or how we raised him." Nicholas Osborne did not address the court.

Densford read aloud from the pre-sentence investigation, which listed the variety of drugs the defendant has used in his relatively short life. "He could have killed people," said Densford, prior to imposing the sentence.

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