

CHAIN SAW KILLER IS LOCKED AWAY FOR LIFE

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Dujuan O'Neal saw \$29,000 in cash and 40 pounds of marijuana and decided it was worth three lives.

So **O'Neal** disrupted a drug deal that his friends were conducting in a Corktown duplex that doubled as a dogfighting den. He grabbed a .357 Magnum from a buffet table and shot and killed three men from Sterling Heights who had come to Detroit to sell dope.

Then **O'Neal** drove to a Home Depot and bought a chain saw. He planned to cut up the men and dispose of their bodies. It didn't work out that way.

On Wednesday, the homicide case that was so gruesome it became the grist for an Elmore Leonard novel concluded during an emotional hearing in Wayne County Circuit Court.

Judge Leonard Townsend sentenced **O'Neal** to mandatory life in prison with no parole.

Before about 20 family members of the victims, **O'Neal**, a 36-year-old Detroiter, proclaimed his innocence, blaming two other men who pleaded guilty in the case. One of them testified against him during his weeklong trial earlier this month.

"I'm the wrong person, but I've accepted my fate through God," **O'Neal** said.

"Burn in hell," one family member shouted.

Townsend said: "He can say he's innocent until hell freezes over. It's not going to change anything."

Townsend told **O'Neal** he believed the jury had made the correct decision.

"You never testified in this case," Townsend said. "Now you turn to the family and say, 'I didn't do it.' "

O'Neal then got sassy with the judge. "You're playing God and making the rules," he told him.

Family members scoffed at **O'Neal**'s remarks, but some of the seven Wayne County sheriff's deputies reminded them they needed to be quiet.

The murders, which took place Nov. 22, 2002, caught the attention of Leonard, who recounted the scene in his most recent book, "Mr. Paradise." Leonard changed the ancestry of the victims from Chaldean to Mexican, but kept many of the facts.

Leonard wrote about "an old duplex two blocks west of Tiger Stadium, an empty building on the corner and then this house . . . one of 'em had a chain saw taken to him, the chain still in the basement, scorched but brand new, the box sitting there. The tech says there's human tissue in the teeth of the saw."

Police said that after **O'Neal** shot the victims in the head, he went out to buy the chain saw and returned to the Vermont Street home and used it on the arms, legs and head of 22-year-old Christopher Kasshamoun. The engine seized, though, because **O'Neal** had failed to add oil. **O'Neal** left to buy gasoline, came back and set the home on fire.

O'Neal took the \$29,000 and fled to Spring Valley, N.Y. The resident of the home, Jamale Stewart, who was a friend of the victims, took the marijuana.

They were caught with the help of a confidential informant.

During **O'Neal** 's trial, Stewart testified he had no plans to kill the men. But once the men were dead, he said he had to go along with the cover-up.

Jurors convicted **O'Neal** on May 10 after only an hour of deliberation.

The two other victims were Kasshamoun's uncle, Wesam Akrawi, 38, and Rany Sharak, 23.

Stewart of Detroit is serving six to 10 years in prison after pleading guilty to being an accessory after the fact, along with helping in the mutilation. Another defendant, Raymone Johnson, a 26-year-old Detroit, also pleaded guilty to the same charges and is serving five to 10 years in prison.

Prosecutors said Johnson helped **O'Neal** and Stewart bag the dismembered body.

Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor Robert Stevens said Stewart's testimony helped seal the case.

"A deal had to be made with him, we needed someone with the information of what was going on in that house," he said.

The victims' family members refused to give their names after the hearing because they fear repercussions from **O'Neal** 's friends.

They said they appreciated the support from Townsend.

"I wish I could have gone up there and hugged Judge Townsend when he spoke out today," one young man said. "We could tell he felt for us and our pain."

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Caption: Photo HUGH GRANNUM/Detroit Free Press

Dajuan O'Neal, 36, of Detroit proclaims his innocence Wednesday in the slayings of three men in a drug case. "I'm the wrong person," **O'Neal** said to disbelieving family members. Police said he shot the three victims, then used a chain saw to cut one of them up.

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