

REALITY HITS TEEN AT SENTENCING FATAL CONFRONTATION LANDS 17-YEAR-OLD IN PRISON

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Darrell Rager, 17, was mad and scared, so he ran and got a shotgun and blew off John Mallon Jr.'s head.

Then, not believing what he had done, he picked up the 16- year-old's body and began shouting "Get up! Get up!"

On Thursday, as the families of both teenagers sobbed loudly, Recorder's Court Judge George Best sentenced Rager to 18 to 40 years in prison for second degree murder. Best told Rager: "This is not TV. . . . This is a case of young men confronting each other with guns, and not understanding what **reality** is. Well, **reality** just **hit** you hard."

Rager was sentenced to two additional years in prison for using a gun.

Not in the courtroom were Brian Kutch, 19, David Cylkowski, 20, and other teenagers who were with Mallon the night of March 8. Witnesses said the group of youths surrounded Rager near midnight as he walked down Acacia Street in the Brightmoor section of Detroit. Rager fled, fetched his roommate's shotgun, returned to the street, forced Mallon and two others to lie on the ground, then fired a single shot into the back of Mallon's head.

The judge had harsh words for the other teenagers from Redford, Farmington and the west side of Detroit, whom he noted had sat in the courtroom laughing during the trial. He said he thought Kutch had lied in his testimony, and he said it seemed as if the only people who recognized what had happened were Mallon's parents, who lost their only child, and Rager.

"I don't think any of the young people here throughout the trial understand or care what happened . . . and that is a crime in itself," said Best.

"I want to know where the parents of all these children were, because all the people out there were kids."

Mallon's father, John Sr., agreed, and said he thought his son's friends should be in jail, too, for starting the incident.

"I actually wish they would have been charged with something, too. They threw my son's life away," said Mallon.

A young man sitting in the courtroom who did not want to be identified said he knew both Mallon and Rager, and said he had spent time hanging out with Kutch and Cylkowski, who called themselves "The Little Boyz in the Hood."

He said he stopped spending time with them "because they had too many guns." Neither Kutch nor Cylkowski could be reached for comment Thursday.

Rager, pale and trembling, told the judge "I really ain't got much to say except I'm sorry. I know that ain't going to cover much. I just wish things had turned out differently."

Then he turned to Mallon's parents, his own brother and girlfriend, and said: "I'm just sorry, that's all. I'm sorry," then slumped back down into his chair.

"I don't think you went out there to kill," said Best. "But you made choices that have caused untold harm."

After the **sentencing**, Best allowed Rager to see his five-month-old son Daniel, who was born while he was in jail, and whom he had not seen until Thursday.

Caption: Photo JOHN LUKE

: (JOHN LUKE/Detroit Free Press) Above: Darrell Rager, 17, is sentenced to 18-40 years in prison on Thursday. He was convicted of killing John Mallon Jr. after Mallon and a group of youths

confronted him in March.

Right: Rager's brother, Daniel, and Rager's girlfriend, Melanie Hunt comfort each other.

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