

DETROIT MAN FACES PRISON IN SHOOTING GIRL, 3, WAS INJURED AT PARK IN WATERFORD

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Tuesday, June 26, 2001

Author: MARSHA LOW FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

A **Detroit man faces** up to 12 years **in prison** after an Oakland County jury found him guilty Monday of **shooting** a girl last year at a Hmong New Year's celebration.

Ngia Lee will be sentenced July 10 **in** Oakland County Circuit Court on charges of assault with intent to commit bodily harm, felonious assault and using a gun while committing a felony.

The case began Oct. 1, when Malena Herr was celebrating her third birthday and the Hmong New Year with an estimated 1,000 Hmong at the Pontiac Lake Recreation Area **in** Waterford.

Lee, who was 18 at the time, told Waterford police he pulled out a .22-caliber semiautomatic gun and fired four shots into the crowd while running. A stray bullet struck Herr **in** the head, and Lee fled the park.

Herr survived, but her mother, Zoua Herr, testified last week that her daughter suffers frequent headaches.

Lee's attorney, Paul Valentino, could not be reached for comment Monday. But Assistant Prosecutor Paul Walton said Lee and members of his family accepted the guilty charges without emotion.

News of the **shooting** spread quickly among the region's 7,000 Hmong residents, a community with a growing concern about gang activity and the lawlessness of their children. The ethnic group originated **in** China, but moved later to Laos, Myanmar and other Southeast Asian countries.

A 1999 case -- **in** which five Hmong gang members were charged with repeatedly raping four Wisconsin teenage girls and holding them captive **in** a **Detroit** home for more than two weeks -- left the community struggling to understand what led their children to such a crime.

Lee, who is not a confirmed gang member, is scheduled to be sentenced at 1:30 p.m. before Circuit Judge Richard Kuhn.

Contact MARSHA LOW at 248-586-2610 or low@freepress.com.

Edition: OAKLAND EDITION

Section: NWS

Page: 1B

Index Terms: NGIA LEE ; MALENA HERR ; HOMICIDE ; SHOOTING; CHILD ; COURT ;
TRIAL ; VERDICT

Record Number: 0106260146

Copyright (c) 2001 Detroit Free Press