

## **JURY CONVICTS MAN OF KILLING WIFE, SON CASE MIRRORED DEATHS OF HIS PREVIOUS FAMILY**

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**Paul Harrington** tragically repeated history when he shot to death his wife and child Oct. 15, 1999 -- 24 years after he shot to death his first wife and two daughters.

But the verdict in **Harrington** 's first-degree murder trial in Wayne County Circuit Court, which concluded Tuesday, deviated from that history.

**Harrington** , who was found not guilty by reason of insanity in 1977 and served only two months in a psychiatric hospital, was found guilty of first-degree, premeditated murder Tuesday.

The jury, after deliberating for about an hour and 15 minutes, rejected **Harrington** 's insanity defense and the alternative verdict of guilty but mentally ill.

"We're glad this man will not hurt anyone else again," said Chester Trail, a relative of Wanda **Harrington** .

Trail and several other of Wanda's relatives, including the Harringtons' remaining child, **Paul Jr.**, 17, watched the entire trial and showed restrained relief at the verdict. They have declined further comment.

**Harrington** showed no emotion as the verdict was read.

**Harrington** , 53, killed Wanda, 47, as she slept, and then shot their son, Brian, 3, in the couple's home in Detroit.

**Harrington** 's insanity defense revolved around an extensive history of war trauma, psychiatric treatment and substance abuse.

Psychologists testified that **Harrington** 's problems began when he served in the Vietnam War. **Harrington** has told various mental health professionals in the past 24 years that his good friend was blown to pieces right next to him and that later, in anger, he mistakenly killed a Vietnamese mother and three children.

He began drinking heavily and later became a heroin addict in an attempt to block out his memories and his violent, psychotic fantasies.

But in 1975, **Harrington** killed his first wife and the couple's two daughters and has claimed he cannot remember committing the crimes, though he has not denied them. He has said he does not remember the 1999 murders, either.

However, **Harrington** admitted to a psychologist in 1980 that he had physically abused his first family. He told a psychologist in the 1970s that his wife, Becky, also found he may have sexually abused one of his daughters in what he described as an alcoholic blackout.

**Harrington** and Wanda married in 1982. Wanda initially did not know about the 1975 killings, but eventually obtained that information.

Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor Ralph Elizondo had little trouble proving that **Harrington** had committed the crimes. The physical evidence was obvious. **Harrington** also confessed to a 911 operator right after the shootings and later gave police a full statement.

It was that ability to describe in detail his crime that proved **Harrington** knew what he was doing when he pulled the trigger, Elizondo argued.

**Harrington** wasn't mentally ill, Elizondo said. "He's a coward. It's women and children" he kills, Elizondo said.

Under Michigan law, the defense had to prove not only that **Harrington** was mentally ill but that he was out of touch with reality when he committed the murders.

Wayne County Circuit Judge Cynthia Hathaway, during her jury instructions, also pointed out that not remembering an event does not prove a defendant is dissociative.

In closing arguments, defense attorney W. Frederick Moore argued that any man who gets up one morning and decides to shoot a 3-year-old three times can't be normal and that his psychiatric problems are serious and well-documented.

**Harrington** had been diagnosed with major depression with psychotic features and post-traumatic stress disorder. He had been prescribed antipsychotic medications.

The penalty for first-degree murder is mandatory life in prison without parole. Sentencing is scheduled for Dec. 1.

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{KEYWORDS} **PAUL HARRINGTON** ; **WANDA HARRINGTON** ; **BRIAN HARRINGTON** ; **HOMICIDE**; **MULTIPLE**; **SPOUSE**; **PARENT**; **COURT**; **TRIAL**; **TESTIMONY**; **VERDICT**; **CHILD**

Caption: Photo WILLIAM ARCHIE/Detroit Free Press

**Paul Harrington** sits motionless Tuesday in Detroit after being found guilty of first-degree, premeditated murder in the 1999 slaying of his wife and child. In 1977, he was found not guilty by reason of insanity in the fatal shooting of his first family.

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