

## MAN GIVEN 60-90 YEARS IN COP KILLING - HE SAYS HE SAW GUN THROUGH DOOR, SHOT

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Minutes before being sentenced Tuesday for **killing** Detroit Police Officer Neil Wells, Lamont Smith told the judge **in** a matter-of-fact tone that he shot Wells last April because he saw someone on the other side of the door with a gun. He said he didn't know that Wells was an officer.

"I did the same thing anybody else would do," said Smith, 22, wearing a yellow jail jumpsuit with a pink pocket.

Wayne County Circuit Judge Thomas Jackson didn't buy Smith's excuse. Jackson went beyond second-degree murder sentencing guidelines, giving Smith 60 to 90 **years in** prison. **In** addition, Smith was sentenced to three to five **years** for being a felon **in** possession of a firearm and two **years** for committing a felony with a firearm.

Smith was charged with first-degree murder and premeditated murder, but the jury convicted him of second-degree murder last month.

"All things considered, it's the right sentence," said Assistant Prosecutor Michael Cox. "This guy should be taken out of society."

State sentencing guidelines dictate that a person convicted of second-degree murder be sentenced to a minimum of 37 1/2 **years in** prison before being released. The sentence leaves no chance of parole until he's at least 87.

"You keep saying that you didn't know it was a police officer on the other side of the door, but you still chose to kill someone at the door," Jackson said.

Wells, 41, was shot April 4 near an abandoned apartment building on Detroit's northwest side after he and three other undercover officers from the 12th (Palmer Park) Precinct responded after hearing gunshots coming from the building. They were **in** an unmarked car **in** the area of Cherrylawn and Ellsworth near Fenkell.

Wells, a 15- **year** -veteran, lay dying **in** the alley outside the apartment's rear door. His partner drove him to Grace Hospital, where he died.

Jackson said he went beyond sentencing guidelines because of Smith's criminal record and his disregard for the justice system.

**In** 1995, Smith, then 16, was charged as an adult by Wayne County prosecutors for carjacking. But after reviewing reports that described Smith's marginal upbringing with little help from drug-addicted parents, a Recorder's Court judge sent him to the W.J. Maxey Training School for two **years** , followed by treatment **in** less-secure programs.

While under the state's watch, Smith walked away from one program. **In** 1999, he was **given** probation by Jackson following a home invasion conviction.

Wells' daughter, Shannon Wells, 18, was pregnant when her father was killed. On Tuesday, she told the courtroom about her anger toward Smith, her disappointment **in** the jury verdict and her love for her dad.

"He went out every day and did his job to protect the people of this city -- the job that wasn't worth it," Shannon Wells said. "I say that because of the shame that this jury has **given** me. They have **given** him a license to kill. They allowed him to pull the trigger and get away with it."

Shannon Wells ended her emotional speech by staring at Smith and saying, "I hope you rot **in** hell."

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