

3 GUILTY IN POLICE KILLING JURY UNANIMOUS ON 12 COUNTS FOR EACH

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A case that began with confusion ended Friday with clear guilty verdicts against three of four men charged in the Dec. 5 ambush-slaying of Detroit Police Officer Shawn Bandy.

Each was found guilty on all 12 counts; the trial for the fourth man, James Langford, is pending.

A 12-member jury that deliberated Wednesday, Thursday and for a brief time Friday morning convicted Detroiters **Montez Moore** , 26, D'Andre Coffee, 25, and Thomas Culbreth, 20.

The three men will be sentenced by Wayne County Circuit Judge Vonda Evans on Aug. 24.

"Three down," said Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor Kevin Simowski. "We have one to go. We want to bring this case to complete closure."

"I can't begin to tell you what a relief it is to know it's over right now," Bandy's mother, Susan Bandy, said while police, prosecutors and families hugged.

"Thank God for the jury."

Moore , Coffee and Culbreth sat stoically as the jury foreman read the guilty verdicts on the 12 charges that included two murder counts, kidnapping, extortion, armed robbery and felony firearm. The two murder counts will require mandatory sentences of life in prison without parole.

Culbreth waved to his mother as he was escorted out of the courtroom.

The defendants' relatives left quickly without speaking to reporters, except for Nadine Culbreth, who told one television station that the verdicts for her son and the others were racist because the jury was dominated by white people.

The fatal shooting on Dec. 5 was triggered by the kidnapping of 30-year-old Athena Akins and her 12-year-old son by five men in a van. The men forced her to withdraw \$400 from an ATM, then paged her boyfriend and demanded \$5,000 in cash within 10 minutes.

Some of the money was paid and the woman and boy were released.

Bandy and his partner, Jeffrey Bonner, spotted the van later that night and pulled behind it. Bandy was talking on the police radio when gunfire from an AK47 semiautomatic rifle erupted from the van and shots struck Bandy and Officer Lloyd Todd, who was in another car.

Bandy died the next day; Todd remains in rehabilitation.

The case was difficult for homicide investigators because many had worked closely with Bandy's father, retired Detroit Police Sgt. Max Bandy, in the the Armed Robbery Unit, according to police Commander Gerald Stewart.

Within two days, two men were charged with the murder. But they turned out to be the wrong men and were released.

Two suspects -- **Moore** and Langford -- fled to Erie, Pa., and surrendered after a seven-hour standoff with police and the FBI.

Langford fired his attorney just as the trial began June 6. Evans appointed a new attorney for him Friday.

"All I want is Langford now," said Max Bandy, now a patrol officer in Livonia.

Police say they believe Langford concocted the kidnapping plan and urged the others to shoot any police who interfered.

In finding the three men guilty, the jury rejected defense claims that prosecution witness Eugene Childrey was a liar. Childrey was in the van when the shots were fired and he testified against his partners in the crime.

Simowski, head of the prosecutor's homicide unit, said the jury also was affected by Todd's testimony. The injured officer lost an eye and had to have part of his skull reconstructed.

Genet Barthwell, Todd's sister, said, "He still continues to learn to walk and talk."

"The jury ought to see the results of what these defendants did," Simowski said.

Bonner said he went back to work immediately after the shooting, but coming so close to death affected him.

"It changes your perspective on life," Bonner said.

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D'ANDRE COFFEE; THOMAS CULBRETH

Caption: Photo WILLIAM ARCHIE/Detroit Free Press; Photo

Shawn Bandy

Montez Moore , left, Thomas Culbreth and D'Andre Coffee listen Friday as the jury foreman reads the verdicts.

Susan and Max Bandy watch Friday as three men are convicted of killing their son, Detroit

Police Officer Shawn Bandy. "Thank God for the jury," Susan Bandy said. Story, Page 3A.

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