

MAN ACQUITTED IN SLAYING OF REPUTED COCAINE KINGPIN JUDGE SAYS HE HOPES 'THE KILLING WILL CEASE'

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Saturday, February 17, 1990

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A Detroit Recorder's Court jury took only 75 minutes Friday to acquit Raed Jihad of the gangland-style slaying of reputed Detroit cocaine lord **Harry Kalasho** a year ago.

After the verdict, Judge Richard Hathaway called for an end to a series of killings in the Chaldean community and told Jihad he was "very fortunate."

"I would suggest that you were very fortunate here today," Hathaway told Jihad. "When you go back out into the community, hopefully, the killing will cease. Good luck to you."

Jihad's own lawyer, Mark Kriger, warned Jihad and his family to leave town. While Jihad was awaiting trial in the Kalasho killing, his father, Adnan, was shot to death in front of a coffee house on John R.

Jurors declined to be interviewed after the verdict, but they told Hathaway and Kriger that the prosecution's evidence did not overcome their doubts.

Jihad -- who called "God bless all of you" to the jurors as they filed out under guard by sheriff's deputies -- was charged with first-degree murder for the February 1989 killing of Kalasho, allegedly the head of a multi-million dollar cocaine ring and responsible for several contract murders.

"I'm happy, but I just wish my father was alive," said Jihad, 20. "They got the hitmen but not the guy who paid for it."

Kalasho's cousin, Ray Akrawi, was twice charged with arranging the killing of Adnan Jihad, but the case was dropped both times when witnesses refused to testify. Two other men have been charged with carrying out the crime.

Jihad, identified as an informant by federal agents, said he wanted the violence to stop.

"Yeah, I'm still scared," he said.

Jihad and his family were taken from the Frank Murphy Hall of Justice through a back entrance.

A bitter Louis Akrawi, patriarch of the Akrawi-Kalasho family, accused federal authorities of complicity in his nephew's killing for using Jihad as an informant against family members and associates.

"I go to the FBI and be a snitch and I get to do what he did," Akrawi said. "It was the federal government from the beginning and they're still in on it. They put us on trial instead of what he

did."

Kalasho's mother, Basima, told reporters that her son had not received justice and that she would like to take the law into her own hands.

"Yes, me. I would kill him," she said.

Kalasho's killing has become the centerpiece in an ongoing struggle for control of a major cocaine network. At least four killings and several bombings in the Woodward-7 Mile Road-John R area have been linked to the strife.

The trial took an unexpected turn in final arguments Thursday when Assistant Wayne County Prosecutor Kenneth Simon accused his key witnesses of using Jihad to kill Kalasho.

Simon argued that Kalasho's lieutenants and bodyguards Issam (Sam the Bull) Hermiz and Najah (Nick) Konja wanted to seize control of the organization and struck an alliance with Jihad, who had own personal reasons to kill Kalasho.

Jihad, according to testimony, believed the Kalasho organization was behind the killing of his brother in 1983 and of a friend in 1988.

Hermiz and Konja did not testify at the trial because they are facing federal drug charges in Florida, but their testimony from an earlier hearing, in which they named Jihad as the killer, was read to the jury.

Simon argued that Hermiz and Konja had to identify Jihad because Kalasho -- who had ordered other enemies murdered and beheaded -- did not die right away and had seen Jihad himself.

"If they didn't tell the truth, they would have faced the wrath of **Harry Kalasho** and we know what that meant: Their heads might have been out on 7 Mile Road," Simon said.

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 3A

Index Terms: RAED JIHAD ; DETROIT ; VERDICT ; HARRY KALASHO; MURDER ; TRIAL ; END ; MAJOR STORY

Record Number: 9001070267

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