

## **DETROIT: JUSTICE FOR SLAIN COP - SISTER ADDRESSES 2 MEN SENTENCED IN HIS KILLING**

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Staring at her brother's killer, Constance Phipps said she'd pray that the gunman and an accomplice would find God.

Phipps' voice quivered Wednesday as she addressed 26-year-old **Elgie Grays** of Detroit, before a judge sentenced him to a mandatory life prison sentence for gunning down Detroit Police Officer Charles Phipps III.

Phipps, 35, of Detroit was shot nine times in the head and back during an attempted carjacking of his minivan around 3 a.m. on April 28, 2006. Family members said he had been out celebrating the birth of his second son, Cameron, who was not quite two days old.

Phipps was killed on his way home.

"You can't even imagine what this has done to our family," said Constance Phipps, 36, of Detroit. "There is but one victory out of this whole tragedy: My brother's life had been laid down so that others may live. There are others out there that they won't get a chance to rob from and kill."

Also sentenced Wednesday was 29-year-old David Currie of Detroit, who was acquitted of murder but convicted of carjacking and assault with intent to commit murder as an accomplice of **Grays**. Wayne County Circuit Judge Bruce Morrow sentenced Currie to 35 to 70 years.

"I pray that they will turn their lives over to God," Constance Phipps said.

**Grays** scowled and declined to speak when given a chance to do so by Morrow.

Currie proclaimed his innocence.

"She needs to read the Bible," he said of Constance Phipps. "You should forgive to receive forgiveness."

Two other men were also charged with Charles Phipps' killing: Detroiters Jason Treadwell, 25, who was convicted earlier this year and Brion McConnell, 56, who pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and testified against Currie and **Grays**.

Treadwell is serving life in prison; McConnell is serving an 18- to 28-year sentence.

Police said the four men went on a crime rampage in which they killed Phipps, pistol-whipped and robbed a woman, carjacked a man and robbed two others.

"All the suspects had guns," said Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor Patrick Muscat. "The evidence points strongly to **Grays** and Treadwell of being the shooters."

Phipps' wife, Collette, had to miss Wednesday's hearing. Her son Cameron is battling pneumonia.

"He's going to be OK," her sister-in-law, Ursulla McWhorter, 37, of Detroit, said after the hearing. "He has the personality of my brother - looks just like him."

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo

CAPTION: Relatives of Officer Charles Phipps III, who was gunned down in an attempted carjacking in 2006, comfort one another after the sentencing Wednesday. From left are his sisters Ursulla McWhorter and Constance Phipps, aunt Shirley McGinnis and sister Latanya Phipps.

CAPTIONWRITER: MARY SCHROEDER / Detroit Free Press

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