

JUDGE SAYS HIT MAN GOT OFF EASY IN VERDICT FOR DRUG GANG KILLING

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Thursday, July 27, 1989
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Drug gang hit man Michael Minley, who says he turned down a \$10,000 bonus to chop off his victim's head, was sentenced Wednesday to a 25-to-50-year prison term for the Woodward Avenue slaying of an alleged competitor.

A Recorder's Court jury convicted Minley of second-degree murder in the December killing of Munthir Salem, but Judge Warfield Moore told Minley the jury's lesser verdict "was contrary to the overwhelming evidence" that the killing was a first-degree murder.

Had Minley, 31, of Ecorse, been convicted of first-degree murder as charged, he would have received a mandatory sentence of life in prison without parole.

Moore said the case was part of a wearisome cycle of drugs, ruined lives and death that has hit Detroit's black youths especially hard.

According to testimony, Minley was the driver of a car from which Salem, 29, was ambushed as he drove away from a gym on Woodward. After Salem was wounded, his car swerved out of control before coming to a halt in the middle of the street. A gunman then ran up and fired several shots into his head, according to witnesses.

Minley and codefendants Edward Stevenson and Lavaron Morris were allegedly working for reputed drug lord **Harry Kalasho**, who wanted to eliminate Salem. **Kalasho** allegedly offered the \$10,000 bonus if Salem's head were tossed into the Arab community on East 7 Mile.

Stevenson and Morris are awaiting trial in the Salem killing, and all three face first-degree murder charges in Oakland County in the November killing of Salaam Gaggo in Southfield. **Kalasho**, who was fatally shot in February, also is alleged to have ordered the Gaggo killing.

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 5B;

Index Terms: SHOOTING ; MURDER ; SENTENCE ; HOMICIDE ; DETROIT

Record Number: 8901300829

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