

MACOMB COUNTY: FAMILIES FIND SOLACE IN VERDICT - JURY CONVICTS FOR SLAYING EX, HER BEAU

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Wednesday, December 3, 2008
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William Green said he has a message for **Xavier Chase**, the man convicted Tuesday of killing his cousin:

"If I had the chance, I'd tell him he's a coward," Green, 61, of Detroit said. "Only a coward would do what he did."

Chase, 40, of Sterling Heights was convicted by a Macomb County jury of five felony counts - including two counts of first-degree murder - for ambushing and fatally shooting Green's cousin, Terry Buchanan, who was dating **Chase**'s ex-girlfriend, Rema Reed.

Buchanan, 36, died outside of Reed's Warren apartment. Reed, 32, clung to life at a Detroit hospital before being taken off life support.

Chase did not react as the verdict was read. He is to be sentenced Jan. 28 by Circuit Judge Peter Maceroni to mandatory life imprisonment.

Members of both victims' families sat alongside each other in a courtroom pew and held hands as they awaited the verdict. Green tightly squeezed the hand of James Reed, Rema Reed's father. Both of them broke into smiles after the jury foreman read the verdict.

"This was like going through a long funeral," said Lillian Mitchell, Buchanan's mother, "but it helped, too. If you do wrong, you have to pay for it."

The jury deliberated for about 2 1/2 hours before reaching the verdict. Beforehand, they'd heard arguments from the prosecution that **Chase** was a scorned lover who laid in wait outside an elementary school across the street from Reed's Continental Avenue apartment for hours before the Nov. 4 shootings.

Chase wore a Michael Myers-style Halloween mask over his face, as well as white long underwear and white gloves, during the slaying, assistant prosecutor Steven Fox said. The disguise made it difficult for witnesses to identify him as the gunman, especially since they saw his ankles and hands and thought he was white. **Chase** is black.

But DNA analysts testified that blood spatters found on the Halloween mask and on the white gloves matched Buchanan, while skin cell swabs inside the items matched **Chase**'s DNA to a 1-in-55-quadrillion degree of certainty.

Christina Buchanan, Terry Buchanan's estranged wife who lives in Florida, began crying when she learned the verdict from a reporter over the phone. The couple has a 14-year-old daughter, Hope.

"She just got on the A/B honor roll and has perfect attendance," Christina Buchanan, 33, said, "and she can't pick up the phone to tell him."

Defense lawyer Tim Barkovic argued that no witnesses described under oath a strained relationship between **Chase** and Reed. **Chase** himself testified that he and Reed were still friends, and that he had gone to her apartment the morning of the slayings to make peace with her and Buchanan.

He told jurors he found the couple dead in the apartment building parking lot and began running because he panicked.

Warren police arrested him a few blocks from the crime scene.

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo

CAPTION: A jury convicted **Xavier Chase** of two counts of first-degree murder for shooting his ex-girlfriend and her boyfriend.

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Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS; NEWS

Page: 3B

Index Terms: homicide; jury; trial; verdict

Record Number: dfp0000655454

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