



BCPO News

Scott A. Coffina, Prosecutor

Philip S. Aronow
First Assistant Prosecutor

Darren N. Anderson
Chief of Detectives



Joel Bewley
BCPO Public Information Officer
Desk: 609-265-5777 Cell: 609-820-4407
jbewley@co.burlington.nj.us

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Pennsauken Man Sentenced for 2017 Burlington City Homicide

MOUNT HOLLY - Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina announced that a Pennsauken man was sentenced today in Superior Court to 19 years in New Jersey state prison for fatally shooting a man during a street fight in Burlington City last year.

Irie Y. Simmons, 19, must serve 85 percent of the sentence before becoming eligible for parole, the Hon. Terrence R. Cook, J.S.C., ruled when handing it down.

Under an agreement with the Prosecutor's Office, Simmons pled guilty in December 2017 to one count of Aggravated Manslaughter (First Degree) in exchange for the 19-year term.

From the bench, Judge Cook said he was satisfied with imposing the sentence called for under the plea agreement because he found it to be "fair and in the interest of justice in light of all of the circumstances of the case."

Simmons stated when he pled that on the night of January 21, 2017, he and Eric Thomas II got into a fight near the intersection of East Broad and Library streets in Burlington City. Simmons admitted that during the course of the scuffle he shot Thomas.

Thomas, 30, of Eastampton, was pronounced dead later that evening at Lourdes Medical Center of Burlington County in Willingboro.

Three of the defendant's relatives and a friend addressed the court today on his behalf. The Thomas family wrote a seven-page letter to Judge Cook, but did not attend the sentencing.

Irie Simmons wrote a letter to the court in which he apologized to the Thomas family and also stated, "I am more than the monster that the newspaper and Prosecutor claim."

The case was prosecuted by Burlington County Assistant Prosecutor Douglas J. Bligh. The investigation was conducted by detectives from the Burlington City Police Department and the Burlington County Prosecutor's Office. The lead investigators were BCPO Det. Michael Reagan and Burlington City Police Det. Bill Ruskowski.

A Cinnaminson man was also charged for his involvement in the fight with Thomas. Xavier L. Myers, 20, faces one count of Aggravated Assault (Third Degree).

END