

North Minneapolis / Teen guilty of murder for jersey

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A Minneapolis teen who shot and killed another boy in an attempt to steal a sports jersey off the victim's back is guilty of murder.

On Friday, a Hennepin County jury convicted Darryl Deshon Johnson Jr. of second-degree unintentional murder, aggravated robbery and assault. The jury acquitted Johnson of a more serious premeditated first-degree murder charge, said Hennepin County prosecutor Michael Freeman.

Johnson, who was 17 at the time of the slaying, faces 15½ years in prison, Freeman said.

"Any rational person is offended by someone getting killed for a jersey," Freeman said. "...We think the public is protected because he is going away for 15 long years."

Fifteen-year-old Courtney Brown was wearing the shirt that caught Johnson's eye – a vintage Morgan State University basketball jersey.

Brown and a friend were walking in North Minneapolis on Sept. 2, when a group of teens, including Johnson, approached. Johnson, carrying a silver handgun, told the pair: "Take off your shoes and your jersey. I'm Crip, cuz. Hurry up. I ain't playing," according to the criminal complaint.

Brown began removing his basketball jersey while the friend pretended to slip off his shoes. But as he feigned taking them off, the friend bolted down the sidewalk, with Brown close behind.

The friend told police he heard three shots and heard Brown say, "I'm hit," and then Brown fell.

Johnson never got the jersey he is accused of coveting. Brown fell face down on the sidewalk after a .22-caliber bullet pierced his heart. Police found the jersey under his body.

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