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Akron Man Sentenced to LIFE IN PRISON for 2018 Murder

AKRON, Ohio (date) – Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh announced today that visiting Judge Patricia Cosgrove sentenced Bryan Esters, 35, of Akron, to LIFE IN PRISON for the 2018 murder of Dominique Thomas.

Esters will be eligible for parole after serving 29 years in prison.

On April 20, 2022, a Summit County jury found Esters guilty of the following charges:

- Two Counts of Murder with Gun Specifications – Special Felonies
- Two Counts of Felonious Assault with Gun Specifications – Felonies of the 2nd Degree
- One Count of Having Weapons Under Disability – a Felony of the 3rd Degree
- One Count of Carrying a Concealed Weapon – a Felony of the 4th Degree
- One Count of Leaving the Scene of an Accident – a Misdemeanor of the 1st Degree

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On July 1, 2018, Sirvonte Rice and Andre Warren were arguing at a restaurant on Pioneer Street in Akron. Rice's cousins, Dominique Thomas and Monica Strickland, along with Tra'Shawn Beasley, arrived to meet Rice. As Thomas and Beasley exited the car, Warren and Esters opened fire and struck Thomas three times. Esters then chased Thomas around the car and shot him four more times at point blank range in the back while Thomas was on the ground. Thomas died from the seven gunshot wounds. Beasley was shot but survived. Strickland remained in the car and was not injured.

Both Warren and Esters fled the scene in separate cars. Esters ran a stop sign and collided with another vehicle while trying to get away. Warren then picked up Esters and both took off.

A Summit County jury convicted Warren on April 17, 2019. He is currently serving a life sentence and will be eligible for parole after serving 29 years of his sentence.

Esters remained a fugitive until he was arrested by federal officers in West Virginia in April of 2020.