

Three New Bedford men convicted of intimidation and assault connected to ongoing murder prosecution

Three New Bedford men were convicted after trial last week on separate intimidation and assault charges connected to an ongoing New Bedford murder prosecution, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

After an eight-day trial in Fall River Superior Court, a jury of their peers convicted John DeBurgo, 25; David Pellot, 20; and DeShaun Hunt, 22, of various charges.

DeBurgo was convicted of intimidation of a witness-threats. Pellot was convicted of intimidation of a witness-threats, and three counts of assault with a dangerous weapon-knife. Hunt was convicted of intimidation of a witness-threats, possession of an illegal firearm, and possession of an illegal loaded firearm.

On March 2, 2017 the defendants engaged in a joint venture to threaten two witnesses in an upcoming murder trial, along with other members of the witnesses' families. The incident took place at approximately 12:39 p.m. in front of the witnesses' Thompson Street home.

The victims are witnesses for the Commonwealth in the murder prosecution of Michael Sousa and Darian Cardoso, who are charged with the 2015 murder of Jeffrey Sylvia, Jr.

The incident began with the defendants and others walking up to the front of the Thompson Street home. Once at the home, DeBurgo called one of the victims a "rat." The group then walked east on Thompson Street and began confronting the other

victim and her father in the middle of the street, while telling them to have the "rat" come outside. Soon thereafter the female witness/victim and her father were joined by the male witness/victim, his mother and his older brother.

At this point Pellot waved a knife in the faces of the group of witnesses/victims. Each of them backed away in fear. When Pellot moved forward with the brandished knife, DeBurgo can be seen on surveillance video clapping and egging him on.

DeBurgo and Hunt each then walked forward on opposite sides of Pellot. At the same time the victims all ran up the driveway and into the house. While doing so, shots are fired from the street. One of the shots strikes the concrete foundation, causing a fragment to chip off and strike one of the victims. One of the victims, believing his family member had just been shot, exited the home to confront the defendants and was shot at by Hunt.

During a sentencing hearing held last Friday before Judge Thomas McGuire, Assistant District Attorney Dennis Collins argued for a seven to 10 year state prison term for DeBurgo and a five to seven years state prison sentence for Pellot. Their defense attorneys recommended a more lenient four year probationary term for DeBurgo and a one year state prison term for Pellot.

Judge McGuire sentenced DeBurgo to three to five years in state prison and Pellot to two to four years in state prison, followed by three years of supervised probation.

Hunt will be sentenced by the court on March 2nd, and is being held in jail at this time.

"The conduct of the defendants, intimidating witnesses in a murder case strikes at the heart of the criminal justice system . These cases are already difficult to prosecute without a group of thugs try to undermine the prosecution through intimidation," District Attorney Quinn said. "Marching

down to the victims' home in broad daylight with knives and guns, and assaulting the victims resembles violence associated with the 'Wild West' and cannot be tolerated."