

Gunman sentenced to 17 years

Friday, June 23, 2006

A St. Mary's judge has sentenced Jermaine Dewitt Dyson to serve 17 years in prison from a roadside confrontation last year, and the convicted felon faces another trial next month on a charge of attempted second-degree murder.

"Mr. Dyson has consistently demonstrated that he is a major danger to the community," St. Mary's Assistant State's Attorney Kevin J. McDevitt said at last week's sentencing hearing, which also detailed Dyson's conviction for burglary in a 1997 break-in that left a man shot in the groin.

"Mr. Dyson is a time bomb," the prosecutor said.

The 29-year-old Lexington Park resident is one of four suspects charged in the alleged robbery of a man outside a Lexington Park motel last January, but Dyson is the only one in the group charged with an attempted homicide offense.

"The allegations are that he held a gun to the victim's head and was pulling the trigger," Assistant State's Attorney James Tanavage said Thursday at the courthouse. "The gun wouldn't go off."

Jurors convicted Dyson last March of first-degree assault and a handgun offense from a May 2005 incident in the Patuxent Homes area of Lexington Park, where Lloyd Horace Brothers was driving shortly before midday one morning and saw one of his relatives.

Dyson ran toward them, then pointed a handgun at Brothers and threatened him with the weapon, according to a charges application filed by St. Mary's sheriff's deputy Robert Merritt.

St. Mary's Circuit Judge C. Clarke Raley, who had sentenced Dyson to 10 years in prison on his guilty plea to burglary in the 1997 case, ordered last week that Dyson serve 12 years in prison for last year's assault plus five years for the related handgun offense.

"I made a bad choice by being in the area," Dyson told the judge. "I'm not the bad person that everybody's trying to make me out to be."

The judge replied, "In another life, you would be a member of the Symbionese Liberation Army. You see yourself as a rebel."

Dyson later pointed out that he has not been tried on the new robbery charge, and the judge focused on the jury's guilty verdict in the assault case.

"There was a sound factual basis for that finding," Raley said. "You're a convicted felon. You have no business having a handgun of any kind."

E-mail John Wharton at jwharton@somdnews.com.