

Man guilty of casino-garage stickup, witness tampering

Written by Administrator
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A Camden man faces a potential sentence of 60 years in prison after being convicted by an Atlantic County jury Friday of robbing a woman in a casino parking garage three years ago.

Authorities say Dashand Chase, 23, and an accomplice netted \$150 in the holdup on Aug. 4, 2009.

Chase also was convicted of bribery and witness-tampering charges related to his attempts to thwart prosecution after his arrest.

The victim, a 39-year-old woman from Egg Harbor Township, told authorities that two masked men, one with a gun, approached her as she was getting out of her car in the garage at Bally's Atlantic City Casino around 9 p.m. She said she was punched in the mouth by one of the assailants. The two men made off with her purse and cellphone, fleeing in a car that had been parked nearby.

Police used the garage surveillance cameras to identify the car and its license plate. It was subsequently found in Woodbury and seized. Inside the car, authorities found two masks, two imitation firearms, and other evidence. Investigators said the car belonged to a friend of Chase's.

Chase and Tony Burnham, 27, also of Camden, were arrested in October 2009 and charged with the armed robbery.

In July 2010, with the case pending in Atlantic County, authorities said, the woman victim received a letter threatening that she and her family would be killed if she testified.

Fingerprints on the letter were those of an inmate at the Atlantic County Jail, where Chase was being held, authorities said.

In February 2011, prosecutors said, Chase sent a letter directly to the victim telling her that he was not the man who robbed her, but would pay her \$150 - the amount that was stolen - "to

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forget about the incident."

And in January, authorities said, another inmate at the Atlantic County Jail falsely confessed that he had committed the robbery. The inmate later recanted and said Chase had asked him to lie.

Based on those allegations, Chase was charged with two counts of witness tampering and one count of bribery in addition to assault and robbery charges.

Following a three-week trial that ended Friday, Chase was convicted on all counts.

The same jury was unable to reach a verdict against Burnham. The Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office said it intended to retry him.

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