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## Fort Worth man sentenced to life in prison for killing pregnant girlfriend

(Fort Worth, TX) – On Monday, a Tarrant County jury found Maurice Kelso Smith, 32, guilty of the 2020 capital murder of Darionne Burley, his girlfriend who was pregnant with their twin boys. He received an automatic sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole for the crime.

Assistant District Attorneys Allenna Bangs and Kate Hinojosa represented the state.

On June 29, 2020, Smith and Burley were last seen exiting a Waffle House in the Fort Worth area. Within the hour, Smith had shot Burley in the back of the head causing her immediate death and the deaths of the babies.

In an attempt to get away, Smith drove to Mansfield where he robbed a woman at gunpoint of her vehicle. He left his car at the scene of the robbery, where police discovered Burley in a bloody crime scene.

Detectives found Smith at his address trying to clean the stolen car and destroy evidence of the murder. Police learned he had committed another attempted robbery at that location as well. Police recovered his clothes, covered in blood, and the murder weapon. It was learned the gun had been illegally purchased the day before. Ballistic evidence matched the firearm to the shell casing in the car where Burley was found.

Despite having a joyful gender reveal party in May, the jury heard evidence that Smith had assaulted Burley in early June and was using drugs heavily at this time.

"In June 2020, Darionne's friends and family were concerned for her safety and it turns out their concerns were valid," Kate Hinojosa argued, "because at the end of the month she would be dead at the hands of this Defendant."

The jury heard evidence that Smith was taken after arrest by Medstar to JPS for several hours with a suspected overdose but that the evidence showed he was faking his intoxication and memory lapse.

"After trying to pick his handcuff lock in the hospital and being sternly warned by police," Allenna Bangs argued, "the reality set in for him that he had murdered his girlfriend and two babies and was going to be facing the ultimate consequence."

The Burley family, in statements after the verdict, told Smith, "there are no winners here," and detailed what life could have been for Darionne and their family without his actions.

DA investigators Caleb Blank and Tim Pinckney and Victim Advocate Clara Salvatierra worked on the case as well. Thanks to the Mansfield Police Department for their work on this case and for their commitment to keeping our community safe.

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