

Appeals court upholds two Trumbull County convictions

The 11th District Court of Appeals on Monday, July 31, 2023, affirmed two Trumbull County criminal convictions, one involving a 2021 murder case.

11th District Judges John Eklund, Matt Lynch and Eugene Lucci upheld the four convictions and 15 year to life prison sentence for defendant Shamar Askew, 20, of Homewood Avenue, Warren, who was charged in the February 2021 shooting death of Ruth Lewis. Askew was sentenced on Sept. 9, 2022, after pleading guilty to first-degree murder, murder, discharging a firearm into a habitation and tampering with evidence.

The appeal dealt with a charge that the trial court erred because “the guilty pleas may have been the product of being uniformed as to the decision of the trial court judge in either granting or denying (defense’s) motion to suppress his statements to law enforcement.”

However, the appellate judges decided this assignment to the trial court was without merit.

In a second appeal, the conviction and 54-month prison sentence of defendant Corey Hoffman was upheld by the 11th District Judges Eklund, Lynch and Lucci.

The 24-year-old defendant from Southington had pleaded guilty to aggravated vehicular assault and failure to stop after an accident, connected to a Sept. 19, 2021 traffic crash which injured a woman on a motorcycle.

Hoffman’s attorney John B. Juhasz had argued the sentence was excessive since the charges for a third-degree and fifth degree felony.

“The trial court erred in imposing a sentence for a non-homicide offense that was disproportionate to the sentences being generally imposed for vehicular assault offenses.”

However the 11th District judges ruled the “appellant has not demonstrated that his sentence is so unusual as to be outside the mainstream of local judicial practice.”

Eklund also wrote: “A trial court is not required to give any particular weight or emphasis to a given set of circumstances.”

Trumbull County Assistant Prosecutor Ryan Sanders argued the case for the state before the 11th District judges.

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