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Press Release

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Woodbury man found guilty, sentenced to life in prison for fatally stabbing wife

STILLWATER, MN --- A Woodbury man has been found guilty of murder and was sentenced to life in prison Friday morning in Washington County District Court.

A jury of eight men and four women found McKinley J. Phillips, 40, guilty of first-degree murder and second-degree murder in connection to the fatal stabbing of his wife on June 25, 2021. According to the complaint, officers from the Woodbury Public Safety Department discovered the body of Phillips' wife Sha-Von, 42, in the basement of their Woodbury home after receiving a 911 call from a woman reporting to be Phillips' mother. The woman told police her son had called her to confess he killed his wife and left her body in the house with six children, ranging in ages 5 to 15. Phillips fled after the stabbing and was located by law enforcement near Tomah, Wis. the following day on a Greyhound bus headed for Chicago.

After a four-day trial, the jury began deliberations on Thursday afternoon and reached a guilty verdict by Friday morning. Washington County Assistant Attorneys Nicholas Hydukovich and Tom Frenette commend the efforts of law enforcement in this case and are grateful to be able to provide some justice to the victim's family.

"Sha-Von Phillips was a loving mother who was brutally murdered by the man who should have loved and supported her," said Frenette. "The swift and thorough investigation conducted by the Woodbury Public Safety Department allowed the State to bring a strong, clear, and concise presentation of evidence. We are grateful the jury agreed that this vicious murder was premeditated and that Mr. Phillips will spend the rest of his life in prison."

Five victim impact statements were read before sentencing, including statements from three of Sha-Von's children, her sister, and a friend. Judge Juanita Freeman addressed Phillips, who declined to make a statement, saying she believed it was only fair and just under the law that he spends the rest of his life in prison dealing with the impacts of the decisions he made.

"The life sentence without the possibility of release imposed by Judge Freeman was necessary in this case," said Washington County Attorney Kevin Magnuson. "I hope the conviction secured today brings some level of justice to the victim's family as they navigate the horrific and senseless loss of a remarkable woman."

Freeman also denied a motion for a new trial and ordered restitution in the amount of \$7,500 to the Minnesota Crime Victims Reparations Board for the reimbursement of Sha-Von's funeral expenses.

Phillips remains in custody at the Washington County Jail awaiting transfer to the Minnesota Department of Corrections where he will serve his life sentence.

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