



**OFFICE OF THE
STATE'S ATTORNEY**
CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND

JAMES A. DELLMYER

State's Attorney for Cecil County, Maryland

Circuit Courthouse • 129 East Main Street, Suite 300 • Elkton, Maryland 21921 • Office: 410-996-5335 • Fax: 410-392-7814

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DELAWARE MAN RECEIVES 180 YEARS
IN 2024 SHOOTING KILLING TWO, WOUNDING TWO**

ELKTON – On September 5, 2025, Delaware resident Justice Schmeek Pratt received a total of 180 years to serve in prison for a 2024 shooting. This sentence follows a guilty verdict passed down by a Cecil County jury in May 2025, in which Pratt was found guilty of 30 charges against him, including two counts of Second-Degree Murder and two counts of Attempted Second-Degree Murder. Cecil County State's Attorney James A. Dellmyer, along with Assistant State's Attorneys Nicole O. Owens and Jacob P. Basht, prosecuted the case.

On November 2, 2024, shortly after 6:00 a.m., Maryland State Police responded to a shooting on Chestnut Drive in Elkton, Maryland. As a result of the shooting, two male victims, Darius Blalock and Tamir Davis, were pronounced dead, while a male victim, Louis Hampton, and a female victim, Andrea Ortiz, sustained gunshot wounds and survived.

During the May 2025 trial, witnesses testified that a house party took place in Elkton during the early morning hours of November 2, 2024, where Pratt was armed and served in a security capacity. Witnesses testified that prior to the shooting a group of people engaged in a verbal altercation, which continued outside of the home onto Chestnut Drive. Several partygoers attempted to break up the altercation. Moments later, nine shots were fired by Pratt.

During sentencing, several family members spoke about the impact this "senseless" act will forever have on their families. Family members of Darius Blalock and Tamir Davis explained how both individuals lived a full life and had a positive, lasting impact on their families and the community. Suyen Estelow, mother of Blalock, described her son as a father who loved his boys

and his family. Estelow addressed Pratt throughout her statement and at one point said, “On November 2, 2024, when you, Pratt, pulled that trigger multiple times, then caused an aftermath of pure horror, you didn’t just take my son’s life, you killed a piece of everyone who loved him.” Tanya Hugh, mother of Davis, spoke to the Court about the last minutes she held her son in her arms and stated, “This will live with us forever. Losing a child is the most brutal loss there is.”

The surviving victims, Louis Hampton and Andrea Ortiz, both expressed how their lives have been changed and how they did not just suffer from physical injuries but also emotional trauma. Hampton described multiple surgeries he has endured and those he will still need in the future. Hampton described the pain of being shot in both of his legs. When speaking about the loss of his friends, Blalock and Davis, Hampton stated, “I pray that no one else must endure the pain of losing someone they love in such a senseless act of violence.” Ortiz also spoke about the loss of Blalock and Davis. She explained how routine tasks are no longer simple because of the trauma she suffered from being shot. Ortiz stated, “I can no longer do a lot of the things I used to enjoy because I am constantly reminded that my arm is not the same and that a lot of things in my life are not the same.” Prior to finishing her statement, Ortiz stated, “I ask the Court to see our hurt and our truths and to fully take into account the evidence that has been presented to you and do the right thing by taking his freedom away and putting him where he belongs for as long as possible.”

Pratt, on the advice of his defense counsel, C. Thomas Brown, chose not to address the Court at Sentencing. Pratt did have family members provide letters to the Court on his behalf. Brown advised the Court that Pratt did not have a criminal record and asked the Court to impose a sentence within Maryland Sentencing Guidelines which were calculated at thirty to fifty years of incarceration.

State’s Attorney James A. Dellmyer asked the Court to exceed Maryland Sentencing Guidelines and cited departure codes to support a sentence above the guidelines. SA Dellmyer argued an upward deviation from the guidelines would be appropriate because Pratt was the sole shooter in this incident. SA Dellmyer stated the level of harm in this case is the most grave and serious type of loss and harm an individual could cause to another. SA Dellmyer advised, “I cannot imagine a more careless, heartless act then shooting into a crowd of people because of a verbal argument.” The maximum sentence that could be imposed on Pratt was 220 years of active incarceration. SA Dellmyer asked for the Court to impose a total of 200 years’ incarceration and to recognize the crimes as crimes of violence, which would cause Pratt not to be parole eligible until he serves a minimum of fifty percent of his sentence. SA Dellmyer advised this conduct “shocks the conscious” and stated that a message needs to be sent to the Defendant and community that this behavior is not acceptable in Cecil County.

After hearing from both the State, defense, victims, and family members and taking time to review the submitted letters, Cecil County Circuit Court Judge Cameron A. Brown imposed a total of 180 years for Pratt to serve in the Division of Corrections. Judge Brown recalled the

testimony and evidence presented during trial and then stated, “Nine rounds from a 9 mm pistol were discharged into a crowd of people resulting in the death of two young men and the maiming of a young man and a young woman. The only real issue at trial was who done it. At the conclusion of all the evidence, hearing the arguments and after hearing the Court’s instructions on the law, the jury determined beyond a reasonable doubt that the Defendant in this matter, Mr. Pratt, was who done it. In all candor, this Court had an opportunity to hear the same evidence that the jury did, and this Court shares the jury’s estimation.” Judge Brown continued to say that after reviewing the victim impact statements, “The ripple effects of what happened that morning extend far and wide.” Judge Brown also stated shooting into a crowd of unarmed individuals is an action the Court sees as “egregious” and “a disregard for the value of human life.”

Pratt received the maximum 40-year sentence for both counts of Second-Degree Murder. Consecutive to the eight years imposed, Pratt was sentenced to the maximum of thirty years for both counts of Attempted Second-Degree Murder. Pratt was also found guilty of four counts of Firearm Use during the Commission of a Crime and sentenced to ten years for each count. All remaining guilty counts merged into the murder and firearm charges.

Following the sentencing, SA Dellmyer stated, “The last ten months have been unimaginably difficult for the surviving victims and for the families of those who were murdered. No sentence or guilty verdict will bring their loved ones back or heal their pain, but my hope for those impacted by this tragedy is that this sentence can provide them with some peace as they continue to move forward and honor their loved ones as I know they do every day. I would like to thank the victims, the victims’ representatives, and their families for their communication with our office throughout this process. I also want to thank the Maryland State Police Homicide Unit for their thorough investigation, dedication, and professionalism. Additionally, I would like to thank staff from my office that supported the prosecution of this case and most importantly for providing support to the families through this process.”

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