



NEWS RELEASE  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Judge Finds Murderer Guilty of Lesser Charge

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Greene County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson announces that the Honorable Calvin Holden today announced his verdict finding Gabriel Luke Roche, 20, of Republic, Missouri guilty of the lesser charge of murder in the second degree and armed criminal action. The defendant had been charged with first degree murder and armed criminal action. This case involved the New Year's Eve, 2011, murder of seventeen year old Weston North by the Defendant Gabriel Roche.

Mr. Patterson stated that he was disappointed and frustrated by the verdict and that "this was a very straight forward first degree murder case." In comments made in court today prior to announcing the verdict, Judge Holden stated that Gabriel Roche knew what he was about to do that night.

To be found guilty of murder in the first degree a defendant must knowingly cause the death of another person after deliberation. Under Missouri law, "deliberation" means cool reflection upon the matter for any length of time no matter how brief. Though there was evidence of methamphetamine use by the defendant, Missouri law also provides that a drugged condition does not relieve a person of responsibility for his conduct.

Evidence was presented by the prosecution in the case that the defendant Roche had taken Weston North to a secluded location near Republic, Missouri after midnight on December 31, 2011. During the trial, the prosecution introduced in evidence the video recorded interview of Roche in which he stated he stabbed Weston North in the "sternum" and that he "was trying to go for the heart," explaining "so it'd be clean. I didn't want to hurt the poor kid." Evidence was also presented that the defendant killed Weston North because he believed he was a snitch providing information to the police

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about Roche. Roche further stated in his recorded interview that, "I wanted to show, my, myself, you know and my brother and whoever could hear for 1,000 miles what happens when you mess up. . ." When talking about his brother's involvement, Roche said that his brother did not see it all and that "I told him to go back to the car because he didn't know what was going on and I thought he did. I thought he wanted to do it, you know? I misunderstood him like on – I was calling him and he was like I got Weston with me and I thought he's like oh you know? So you want to kill Weston too." Mr. Roche stated in the recorded interview that as he attacked Weston North his brother "cried and told me to stop. He said 'please don't do it.' And he said, 'he doesn't deserve it.' And I'm like, 'no he deserves it.'"

If the court had found Roche guilty of murder in the first degree he would have been sentenced by law to life in prison without the possibility of parole. After finding Roche guilty of murder in the second degree, Judge Holden sentenced Roche to life in prison on the murder and the minimum three year sentence on the armed criminal action count to be served concurrently or at the same time. Under the court's verdict and sentence, Roche will be eligible for parole after serving twenty-five and half years at age forty-three. During the sentencing hearing today, Prosecutor Patterson argued that the court should sentence the Roche to life on the court's second degree murder verdict and 30 years on the armed criminal action count to be served consecutively or one after another.

**This case was prosecuted by Prosecuting Attorney Dan Patterson. It was investigated by the Greene County Sheriff's Office and Detective Curtis Hunt was the lead investigator assigned to the case.**

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