



Man pleads guilty to Covington killing

By Brenna R. Kelly • bkelly@nky.com •
September 30, 2010

COVINGTON - A Cincinnati man pleaded guilty Thursday to killing a man during a shootout at the City Heights housing complex in July.

Justin Ray, 24, was one of three shooters involved in the July 27 melee that left 23-year-old Otis Rice dead and two other men injured, police and prosecutors said.

Police found more than 30 shell casings strewn over more than a block, Sanders said.

Ray, who pleaded guilty in Kenton Circuit Court to reckless homicide and possession of a handgun by a convicted felon, will be sentenced Nov. 8 by Judge Gregory Bartlett.

Ray and his attorney, Shannon Sexton, agreed to a sentence of seven and a half years in prison, said Kenton County Commonwealth's Attorney Rob Sanders.

Police had originally charged Ray with second-degree manslaughter but a grand jury indicted him on the lesser charge of reckless homicide. He was previously convicted of carrying a concealed weapon in Hamilton County.

On the night of July 27, Rice and Ray were apparently fighting over the theft of a high-powered assault rifle, Sanders said. The two and several of their friends met up near Todd Court in the housing project where Ray had been staying with his girlfriend. At least three people fired guns in the shootout that ensued.

"We can only prove that Mr. Rice was shot by Mr. Ray," Sanders said.

Investigators believe Rice also had a gun and

was firing toward Ray, but his gun was not recovered at the scene, Sanders said. Ray was not injured.

Another man, Jerome Mitchell, 24, who was friends with Rice, was also injured in the shooting. Sanders said investigators believe he may have also fired a gun during the fight.

"Jerome Mitchell has been completely uncooperative with police," Sanders said. "We don't have enough evidence to prove that he is the third shooter."

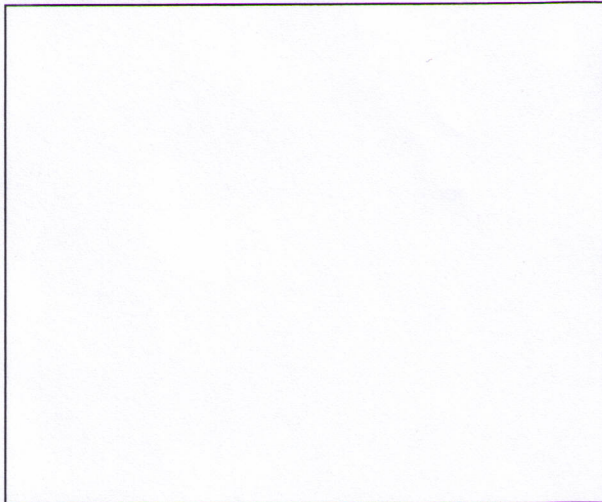
The third man injured in the shooting, Devanei Miller, 28, was not involved in the fight and was an innocent bystander, Sanders said. He was standing behind Ray when he was shot.

Police have not recovered the assault rifle that apparently started the fight, Sanders said. However, there were spent shell casings from the rifle at the scene.

None of the men involved actually lived in City Heights and all were convicted felons, Sanders said.

Rice had been booked in the Kenton County jail 20 times in four years. Ray, in addition to the weapons charge, also served time in Ohio prison on cocaine charges.

Advertisement



Print Powered By Formal Dynamics