



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **District Man Sentenced to 67 ½ Years in Prison For the August 2008 Shooting of Two Brothers - Shots Killed One Victim, Wounded Another -**

WASHINGTON - Charles Elegalam, 23, of Washington, D.C., was sentenced today to 67 ½ years of incarceration for crimes related to the August 12, 2008 slaying of Jason Fennell and shooting of Justin Fennell, brothers and both District of Columbia residents, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

Elegalam was convicted in November 2010 by a jury in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. He was sentenced by the Honorable Judge Herbert B. Dixon, Jr. on charges of first degree murder while armed, assault with the intent to kill while armed, aggravated assault while armed, multiple counts of possession of a firearm during a crime of violence, and carrying a pistol without a license.

According to the evidence elicited during the week-long trial, Jason and Justin Fennell were crossing through the 300 block of Decatur Street, NW on their way home, early on August 12, 2008, when they passed by Elegalam and another man. Justin Fennell, then 19, stopped and asked the two men for a light. A brief argument ensued, but it was quickly resolved when Jason Fennell, 27, and the man with Elegalam realized they knew people in common. Justin Fennell also recognized Elegalam as someone with whom he had gone to middle school six years earlier.

As Justin Fennell was watching Elegalam, he noticed that the defendant was holding a gun to his side. Justin Fennell pulled his older brother away from the conversation, and they began walking away with their backs turned towards Elegalam. Moments later, Elegalam lifted his gun, pointed it at Jason Fennell, and opened fire. Only a single bullet hit Jason Fennell, but that bullet went through his lung, aorta, and spine, and he died soon thereafter, on the sidewalk.

Elegalam then turned toward Justin Fennell, and began firing. Justin Fennell was shot between seven and 12 times. Although he was hit in the neck, back, and legs, he survived. After firing a total of 15 times, the defendant fled the scene, leaving both victims for dead. Indeed,

Justin Fennell was pretending to be dead before Elegalam finally stopped shooting.

After the sounds of gunshots ended, a neighbor called 911 and came to Jason and Justin Fennell's aid. She asked Justin Fennell if he knew who the shooter was, and Justin Fennell answered in the affirmative.

During the sentencing today, Judge Dixon noted that the violence caused "so many losses suffered on all sides." He emphasized the loss the community has felt from the murder of Jason Fennell, who was a junior deacon at his church.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Machen expressed his appreciation to the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), and particularly praised the work of Violent Crimes Branch Detectives Doug Carlson and Paul Regan. He also commended the work of Legal Assistant Kelly Blakeney, who helped prepare the case for trial, Litigation Technology Specialist Leif Hickling, who created graphics to help illustrate what happened the night of the murder, Intelligence Specialist Lawrence Grasso, who mapped out the use of the defendant's cell phone on the night of the murder, and Victim Witness Unit's Marcia Rinker, who helped reassure the victim's family throughout the investigation and at trial. Finally, he praised the outstanding work of Assistant United States Attorney George Pace, who indicted the case, and Assistant United States Attorney Sharad S. Khandelwal, who prosecuted the case at trial.

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