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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, March 22, 2011

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District Man Found Guilty of Murdering Man by Stabbing Him Eighteen Times, Including Fifteen Times in the Back

WASHINGTON – A Superior Court of the District of Columbia jury today found Justin L. Navarro, a 25-year-old resident of the District of Columbia who was also known as “Fool,” guilty of First Degree Murder While Armed for the brutal murder of Kevin Massey, 31, on November 6, 2009, announced U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. and Cathy L. Lanier, Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). Additionally, the jury found the defendant guilty of obstruction of justice, tampering with evidence, and carrying a dangerous weapon. The U.S. Attorney’s Office had charged defendant with committing this murder because of Mr. Massey’s sexual orientation, but the jury did not make that finding beyond a reasonable doubt. Sentencing is scheduled for May 24, 2011. At sentencing, the defendant faces a minimum sentence of 30 years in prison and a maximum sentence of life in prison.

According to the evidence elicited during the week-long trial, about a month prior to the murder, the defendant was being carried out of the apartment building where the murder eventually took place at 4211 2nd Street N.W. Teenagers began laughing at the defendant, particularly when the defendant’s loose pants began to fall down. According to a witness, the victim, Kevin Massey, leaned over to pull up the defendant’s pants for him. In response to this act, the teenagers began teasing the defendant by saying Mr. Massey was going to make the defendant “his next bitch.” The defendant then turned towards Mr. Massey and gave him the “evil eye.”

During the month that followed, the defendant was the target of rumors about his sexual orientation. On one occasion, the defendant was heard loudly denying these rumors and vowing to kill Mr. Massey. On another occasion, the defendant called a relative and asked her to beat an acquaintance whom he believed was spreading these rumors.

On November 6, 2009, the defendant knocked on the door of Mr. Massey’s apartment and asked, “Where’s the faggot?” After being told Mr. Massey was in the bedroom, the defendant went into the kitchen and grabbed a large butcher knife. The defendant went into the bedroom, and, without any warning, began stabbing Mr. Massey repeatedly. Mr. Massey died on the scene,

and a later autopsy revealed that Mr. Massey was stabbed between eighteen and twenty times, including fifteen times in the back.

In the days that followed, the defendant threatened witnesses, burned his clothes, and told relatives he would not be around for a while. Five days after the murder, the Capital Area Regional Fugitive Task Force arrested the defendant in a hotel room in southwest D.C.

At trial, the defendant testified that he acted in self-defense. The defendant testified that he did not know Mr. Massey, and that Mr. Massey attacked him for no apparent reason. The defendant testified that he believed Mr. Massey was either going to kill him or rape him.

“This murder was marked by its unspeakable brutality,” said U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. “Today’s first-degree murder conviction ensures that the defendant will be held accountable for this senseless and deplorable act of violence.”

In announcing the jury’s verdicts, U.S. Attorney Machen expressed his appreciation to the MPD and the Capital Area Regional Fugitive Task Force, and particularly praised the work of Violent Crimes Branch Detectives Gus Giannakoulis, Thomas Webb, James Wilson, Joshua Branson, and Norma Horne, Detective Lt. Ozetta Posey, and Mobile Crime Technicians Leather Strong and William Hyatt. He also commended the work of Legal Assistant Kelly Blakeney, who helped prepare the case for trial, Litigation Technology Specialists Leif Hickling and Kimberly Smith, who created graphics to illustrate what happened the night of the murder, Intelligence Specialists Lawrence Grasso and Shannon Alexis, and Marcia Rinker and Tanya Via of the Victim Witness Assistance Unit. Finally, he praised the outstanding work of Assistant U.S. Attorney Sharad S. Khandelwal, who investigated, indicted, and prosecuted the case at trial.

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