

Des Moines Man Sentenced to 32 Years for Attack on Guard at Federal Detention Center

Local News

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SeaTac, WA - A 22-year-old Des Moines, Washington man will spend 32 years in prison for the January 2012 beating of a prison guard and for the forced labor of two juveniles in the sex trades, announced U.S. Attorney Jenny A. Durkan. Sabir Shabazz was in federal custody for sex trafficking two 13-year-old girls when on January 3, 2012, he and another inmate assaulted a guard at the Federal Detention Center at SeaTac. Shabazz beat the guard with a pipe. The men claimed the attack was an escape attempt, but video of the assault shows it was just a brutal attack. Other inmates intervened in the assault, likely saving the guard's life. At sentencing U.S. District Judge James L. Robart said the attack was carefully planned and "the blows were done to injure." "This brutal assault on a prison guard rightfully earned this defendant a lengthy term behind bars," said U.S. Attorney Jenny A. Durkan. "He preyed on vulnerable 13-year-old girls while on the streets and viciously attacked one of the people we trust to keep our prisons and communities safe and secure. This conduct will not be tolerated." According to records filed in the case, in September 2010, Shabazz was arrested in connection with the sex trafficking of two 13-year-old girls. Shabazz posted ads featuring the girls on backpage.com and with a co-conspirator took the earnings the young girls made in the sex trades.

Shabazz was being held on the sex trafficking charges when he assaulted the guard at the federal detention center. The guard suffered significant head wounds, which were nearly fatal. He has required surgery and significant rehabilitation. He likely will never be able to return to work as a prison guard. In their sentencing memo, prosecutors wrote, "It is hard to imagine a worse set of offenses— an assault calculated at killing a defenseless jail guard and involvement in the commercial sexual exploitation of two 13 year old girls.... Both girls were runaways and looking for shelter. Unfortunately, they sought help from two people, including Shabazz, who viewed the two girls as tools to make money without regard for their well being." The Tacoma Police Department and the FBI's Innocence Lost Task Force investigated the sex trafficking case; the FBI and Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) investigated the prison assault. The cases against Shabazz are being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Bruce Miyake and Mike Lang.