



U.S. Department of Justice

**Stephen J. Murphy
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Eastern District of Michigan**

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For Immediate Release:

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EVENT: Sentenced

Defendant: Earl L. Johnson

DETROIT MAN SENTENCED TO LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE FOR MURDER AND BANK ROBBERY

A former Ford Motor Company employee and Detroit resident was sentenced today to life in federal prison for murder using a firearm and bank robbery resulting in death, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced today.

Murphy was joined in the announcement by FBI Special Agent in Charge Andrew G. Arena, of the Detroit Division.

Earl L. Johnson, 40, of Detroit, a former employee of the Ford Motor Company at the Dearborn Assembly Plant, had been convicted in November by a federal jury in Detroit. United States District Judge Victoria A. Roberts pronounced today's sentence.

The evidence presented during the trial showed that during the early morning hours of December 14, 2001, Johnson and five other man robbed an armored truck delivering money to the ATM machines at the Dearborn Federal Credit Union. During the course of the robbery, armored truck guard Norman Anthony Stephens was shot in the back and killed with shotguns used by the robbers. Johnson and his fellow robbers escaped the scene with \$204,000 in

cash. At the time, Stephens and his two fellow guards were employees of Total Armored Car Services. Stephens was married, and he and his wife had six children.

In its verdict, the jury found Johnson guilty of conspiring between June 2001 and December 2001 with six other men to commit bank robbery. In addition, Johnson was convicted of robbing the Dearborn Federal Credit Union and of killing Mr. Stephens during the course of the robbery. Finally, Johnson was convicted of murdering Mr. Stephens with a firearm during the course of a violent crime.

Johnson has no possibility of parole.

United States Attorney Murphy stated that, "We all realize with great regret that nothing can restore the life of the brave armored truck guard, Norman Anthony Stephens, to his family. Today's life sentence, however, metes out a highly appropriate measure of justice to Johnson - a defendant who committed this terrible robbery and murder. This was a significant prosecution and the FBI - along with our office's strong team of trial lawyers -- deserve a great deal of credit for the work they did in proving this case."

Andrew G. Arena, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation said, "I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Dearborn Police Department for their assistance, professionalism and dedication throughout this investigation."

The case was investigated by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys R. Michael Bullotta and David A. Gardey.