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# Man sentenced for his role in city killing

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BY JONATHAN SHUGARTS REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

WATERBURY — A 22-year-old man will spend six years in prison for his role in the killing of a 20-year-old who was gunned down near a city housing project in 2010.

Timothy "TJ" Gainey died after he was shot in the head during a fight near the Harris Circle housing complex in July 2010. Gainey initially survived the gunshot, but died later at a city hospital.

Two men, Corderrial Johnson and Robert Bowens, were later arrested for the shooting after a witness told police the men were harassing Gainey and pressuring him to hang out with them. The men were former classmates with Gainey at Crosby High School.

The summertime shooting occurred after Gainey, joined by his uncle, drove to Harris Circle to talk to Johnson and Bowens. That meeting turned into a brawl, which led to the shooting.

Bowens drew a small handgun and pistol-whipped Gainey in the head, according to police, which prompted Gainey's uncle to jump in to protect him. Bowens dropped the gun after he beat Gainey, but as the fight continued, Johnson picked up the weapon and began firing.

Police say Johnson fired a shot at Gainey's uncle, but missed, then turned the gun on Gainey, firing a bullet that hit him in the head.

Bowens was scheduled to pick a jury Thursday morning for his trial in Waterbury Superior Court, but he opted to take a last-minute plea deal instead. Bowens was convicted of conspiracy at first-degree assault and second-degree assault as part of that agreement.

Gainey's mother was at the hearing, crying as she described to Judge Richard Damiani the pain she feels from the loss of her son. Gainey and Bowens were best friends, she said. Now she visits her son's grave, leaving balloons at the site. "You have to see what that lady is going to go through the rest of her life," Damiani told Bowens.

Bowens turned to Gainey's family, telling them he was "sorry for the loss." He said nothing else to the family.

In addition to prison time, he'll serve three years of probation when he's released.

Johnson was convicted last week of first-degree manslaughter with a firearm after he accepted a plea deal that calls for him to spend at least 12 years in prison. He's set to be sentenced in June.

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