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# Survivalist sentenced to death for murder of PA state trooper

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Eric Matthew Frein exits the Pike County Courthouse with police officers after an arraignment in Milford, Pennsylvania, October 31, 2014. RE

By Joe McDonald

MILFORD, Pa. (Reuters) - A survivalist convicted of killing a Pennsylvania state trooper in a 2014 sniper attack that launched a massive manhunt was sentenced to death on Wednesday by jurors.

The Pike County jury deliberated for about five hours before returning the verdict in the penalty phase of Eric Frein's trial.

"Tonight full justice was delivered!!" District Attorney Ray Tonkin wrote on Twitter after the jury sentenced Frein to die.

Frein showed no emotion as the death sentence was read in court. One of his attorneys William Ruzzo said he planned to appeal, CNN reported.

"I'm surprised by it," he told reporters after the verdict. "But they're the jury ... we work within the system, and they made their decision."

The same jury last week convicted Frein, 33, of first-degree murder of a law enforcement officer for the fatal shooting of Corporal Bryon Dickson II, 38, outside the Blooming Grove barracks.

Frein, who evaded capture for weeks following the attack, was also convicted of other charges, including terrorism and the attempted murder of Trooper Alex Douglass, 34, who was shot and critically wounded as he rushed to Dickson's aid.

Frein is a survivalist and at trial prosecutors told jurors that the sniper attack was aimed at sparking a "revolution" against the U.S. government.

In closing arguments in the trial's death penalty phase on Wednesday, Ray Tonkin, the Pike County district attorney, repeatedly referred to Frein as "that murderer over there" and said the defendant methodically planned the ambush.

Tonkin also played a recorded jailhouse telephone conversation in which Frein can be heard telling his mother how he wanted to sell his story to the media. Frein can be heard repeatedly laughing on the recording.

Michael Weinstein, the lead defense lawyer, said Frein was the victim of a dysfunctional family who was influenced by anti-police views held by his father, a retired Army major.

After the shooting, Frein eluded a 48-day manhunt through the dense forests of the Pocono Mountains, about 100 miles (160 km) north of Philadelphia.

The \$11 million search, which put the community on edge for weeks, ended when he was captured by U.S. marshals outside an abandoned airplane hangar near Tannersville, Pennsylvania.

(Reporting by Joe McDonald in Milford, Pennsylvania and Dan Whitcomb in Los Angeles; Editing by Barbara Goldberg and Peter Cooney)

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