

Three criminals receive lengthy prison sentences on November 3 in Circuit Court hearings

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Three convicted people learned their fates during sentencings in separate criminal cases conducted on Tuesday, November 3, in Scott Circuit Court.

Jason D. Arbuckle, 35, Lexington, received the longest sentence. His prison stay will be 30 years for dealing in methamphetamine, a Class A felony.

Arbuckle may be remembered as the defendant who didn't show up for his own trial on that charge this past August. He was arrested and charged with the felony dealing count in June, 2006, after selling the illegal meth to a female undercover officer with the Indiana State Police. His trial was the first in Scott County held in absentia, without the defendant present. The jury quickly found that Arbuckle was guilty of the charge on August 5. He was located and arrested on August 13. A mental examination was requested by Arbuckle at the end of that month. That was done and submitted to the court in September.

In the presence of Prosecutor Jason Mount, Judge Roger Duvall sentenced Arbuckle to 30 years with the Indiana Department of Corrections (IDOC). He was allowed 324 days credit for time served. No fine was assessed and his court costs were waived.

Judge Duvall informed Arbuckle of his right to appeal his sentencing, and he indicated that he would be filing that action. A public defender will assist him in preparing the appeal.

Bennito Lee Rodriguez's sentence was sentenced to ten years with the IDOC for a Class B felony of dealing cocaine. He was given 147 days' worth of credit for time served. He was also ordered to pay court costs, a drug enforcement fee of \$450 and a drug interdiction fee of \$500.

In the plea agreement reached, two Class A felony charges of dealing in cocaine and dealing in cocaine (conspiracy) against Rodriguez filed in the same 2006 case were dismissed as were several petitions to revoke suspended sentences and other more minor, outstanding criminal charges. Most of the costs and fees were ordered paid out of his bond. Another \$9,500 of the bond was ordered released to his attorney.

The final sentencing involved a stabbing case in May, 2008, northeast of Austin. Defendant Amanda Vernon, 24, Scottsburg, was sentenced to four years on Class C felony battery and ten years on Class B burglary.

Vernon offered the prosecutor a "blind" plea in the case. She had stabbed Jessica Groenenboom in the chest after arguing with the victim over Vernon's ex-boyfriend with whom both Vernon and Groenenboom had had children. Her other charges of attempted murder, a Class A felony, aggravated battery, a Class B felony, and a Class C felony battery, were dismissed in the agreement, and the woman also waived her right to appeal her sentencing.

Her two sentences will run concurrently with credit for time served of 65 days. Two of those ten years was suspended and will be served on supervised probation by Vernon once she gets out of prison.

Vernon paid no fine but shall pay her court costs within a year after she is released from prison. She will also pay restitution of \$1,967.46 to Groenenboom within that year. A "no contact" order was also issued against Vernon to keep her away from Groenenboom.