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Man guilty in shoot-out with FBI

The '94 Broad Street firefight killed one man and wounded two agents. It was Melvin Williams' second conviction in the incident.

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A North Philadelphia man was convicted by a federal court jury yesterday in the spectacular 1994 North Broad Street shoot-out with the FBI that left one man dead and two agents and another man wounded.

The U.S. District Court jury deliberated for about eight hours Tuesday and yesterday before convicting Melvin Williams, 22, of conspiracy to commit robbery, conspiracy to assault and kill federal agents, and related charges in the March 16, 1994, incident at Broad Street near Hunting Park Avenue in North Philadelphia.

U.S. District Judge Clifford Scott Green ordered Williams to remain in federal custody pending a formal sentencing hearing Dec. 11. Williams has been imprisoned since the 1994 shoot-out and in February 1995 was sentenced by the judge to a 27-year no-parole sentence with the shoot-out.

In December, Green ordered a new trial for Williams and co-defendant Tremaine Jackson, 23, after federal prosecutors disclosed that FBI officials withheld information — from both prosecution and defense lawyers — that could have undermined the credibility of an FBI agent who was a key prosecution witness in the trial.

Jackson then pleaded guilty and, during last week's trial of Williams, testified that Williams gave the order to fire at FBI agents as he and three others sat in a car stopped by agents and city police on North Broad Street.

Williams' attorney, Hope C. Lefeber, said she would file posttrial motions with Green challenging aspects of Williams' indictment and trial.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Louis R. Pichini said after the verdict that his office would petition Green to reduce Jackson's 23-year prison term to recognize his cooperation.

Jackson and Williams were in a black Hyundai with two companions at midday March 16, 1994, when FBI agents stopped the car on North Broad near Hunting Park.

According to trial testimony, agents had tailed the car for several blocks and then surrounded it to try to extricate the driver, an FBI informant named Wayne Caldwell, who was about to be compromised by his presence with Williams, Jackson and a third man, Jermaine Lipscomb. The three were on their way to rob a drug dealer and the informant was in the car, according to trial testimony.

A shot was fired from inside the car, the FBI returned fire, and a gun battle erupted. Lipscomb was killed. Jackson and agents Timothy Turck and Richard Macko were wounded.

After Williams' and Jackson's appeal was denied, the case seemed over.

Then, in July, federal prosecutors contacted Williams' and Jackson's attorneys and told them that FBI officials had withheld from prosecution and defense lawyers that Turck was under investigation at the time of the shoot-out and during the trial.

The internal FBI probe stemmed from allegations by Turck's estranged wife that he concealed his epilepsy from the bureau when he applied for a job, used his FBI credit card to make personal purchases, and was involved in the theft of \$25,000 from an FBI evidence safe in 1990.

Turck resigned in 1995 under pressure. Prosecutors said he was not prosecuted in the theft of the \$25,000 because the statute of limitations had expired by the time they learned of the incident.

Williams' and Jackson's attorneys then petitioned Green to grant them a new trial on the ground that the defense was denied information it could have used to challenge Turck's credibility before the jury.

With Jackson's testimony available, Pichini said, neither Turck nor Caldwell was needed for the second trial, and neither testified.

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