

## Sentences reduced for hate crimes

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Two men convicted of conspiring to commit race-motivated assaults in order to spread a message that nonwhites are not welcome in Salt Lake City had their sentences significantly reduced Wednesday.

Shaun A. Walker and Travis D. Massey appeared in U.S. District Court to be resentenced after the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals overturned several sentencing factors last April. Although U.S. District Judge Dee Benson felt the original sentences were appropriate, he resentenced Walker and Massey to 37 and 30 months respectively, essentially cutting their original sentences in half.

Walker, Massey and Eric G. Egbert were found guilty by a federal jury in the beatings of two men outside of two Salt Lake bars as part of a conspiracy to spread fear among Utah minorities and to start a "race war."

At the time, all three men were members of the National Alliance, a national organization that espouses anti-immigration and racial separatist rhetoric. After the last assault in 2002, Walker went on to become the national chairman for the National Alliance. Massey claimed to be the Utah chapter leader.

While the 10th Circuit upheld most of the sentencing factors, the court found there was insufficient evidence to find that Walker held a leadership position in the conspiracy at the time and that one of the victims suffered serious bodily injury, mainly because despite witness accounts, the victim was never found. Egbert's entire 42-month sentence was upheld.

In court Wednesday, defense attorneys for Walker and Massey praised their clients as extraordinary citizens with no criminal histories. Attorney Ann Taliaferro said her client always preached to his followers to "stay legal." "He is not a violent man," she said.

Attorney Deirdre Gorman pointed out that Massey had served in the Marine Corps and had only two semesters left of college. Massey had also indicated to the court that he aspired to become an English teacher.

Having served 28 months in federal prison, Massey's new sentence will mean he may be released in two months. Walker will have about 22 months left to serve and could be placed in a federal halfway house. Family and supporters shed tears at the announcement.

Despite the reduction, Benson said these were serious offenses motivated by racial hatred. Benson pointed out that while at a local bar, the men handed out anti-immigration stickers that stated nonwhites were "messy" and "noisy," and that they were turning America into a "Third-World slum."

Defense attorneys said Walker and Massey are no longer National Alliance members.

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