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DPP CHAMBERS PRESS RELEASE

January 2014 Criminal Assizes:

Goal Delivery was done on Friday 28th March, 2014 bringing to an end the January 2014 Criminal Assizes which commenced on Wednesday 15th January, 2014. The Demerara January 2014 Assizes was presided over by four judges, Justice Franklin Holder, Justice William Ramlall, Justice James Bovell-Drakes and Justice Navindra Singh. A total of 233 cases were listed to be heard during the Assizes.

Eighteen (18) matters were completed during the Demerara January 2014 Criminal Assizes in the High Court of Demerara. Of these eighteen matters, sixteen of them were presented and two of them were nolle prosequi in writing by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Of these sixteen matters which were presented, there was a total of eleven verdicts and five pleas. For the eleven matters where there were verdicts there was one guilty verdict, eight not guilty verdicts and two hung jury verdicts.

Five accused who were indicted for Murder, pleaded guilty to the lesser offence of Manslaughter.

Justice Franklin Holder completed five matters. Of these five matters, four were for the offence of Murder and one was for the offence of Rape. In two of the Murder trials, the accused pleaded guilty to the lesser offence of Manslaughter and were sentenced to 18 years and 10 years imprisonment respectively. In a third Murder matter, the accused was acquitted after the jury returned a unanimous verdict of not guilty of Murder and not guilty of Manslaughter. In a fourth Murder trial, the two accused were ordered to face a retrial after the jury returned with a split decision of six guilty and six not guilty. The accused in the Rape trial was acquitted after the jury returned a verdict of not guilty.

At the same time Justice William Ramlall disposed of three matters also for the offence of Murder. In all three matters, the Trial Judge up held no case submissions and directed the jury to return formal verdicts of not guilty. In one of these matters in which two accused were indicted for the offence of Murder, the charge against the number one accused was discontinued by the Director of Public Prosecutions because of insufficient evidence.

Meanwhile, in the one Murder trial before Justice James Bovell-Drakes, the accused was ordered to face a retrial after the jury returned a hung jury verdict.

Justice Navindra Singh disposed of seven (7) cases for the offence of Murder in which there were four guilty verdicts and three not guilty verdicts. In the first Murder trial, the accused was sentenced to 18 years imprisonment after the jury returned a guilty verdict for the lesser offence of Manslaughter.

In three other murder trials in which the accused pleaded guilty to the lesser offence of Manslaughter, two of these accused were sentenced to ten years imprisonment , while a third accused was sentenced to a total of 47 years imprisonment on two counts of Murder, each being 21 years and 26 years respectively.

In three other Murder cases the accused were acquitted after Justice Singh up held no case submissions and directed the jury to return formal verdicts of not guilty.

During the Demerara January 2014 Criminal Assizes the DPP nolle prosequi two matters. One of these matters was for the offence of Murder where there was insufficient evidence to continue with the prosecution and the other matter was for the offence of Carnal Knowledge of Girl under 15 years in which the victim indicated by way of a statement that she did not wish to proceed with the matter.

Meanwhile at the Essequibo Criminal Assizes, five matters were completed. Four of them were presented before Justice Nareshwar Harnanan and one was nolle prosequi in writing by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Of these four matters, three were for the offence of Murder and one was for the offence of Carnal Knowledge of a Girl between Fifteen and sixteen years.

In two of the three Murder trials, the accused were acquitted. In the third Murder trial, a formal not guilty verdict was returned by the jury after the father of the deceased informed the Court that he did not wish to give evidence and did not wish to proceed with the trial.

In the one matter for the offence of Carnal Knowledge of a Girl under fifteen years, the accused was acquitted after the jury returned a unanimous verdict of not guilty.

During the Essequibo January 2014 Criminal Assizes, the DPP nolle prosequi one matter for the offence of Carnal Knowledge of a girl under fifteen years because the virtual complainant indicated that she did not wish to proceed with the matter as she has migrated.

During the same time, the Berbice October 2013 Criminal Assizes continued with Madam Justice Diana Insanally completing three matters for the offence of Murder. One accused pleaded guilty to the lesser offence of Manslaughter and was sentenced to ten years imprisonment.

In the other two Murder trials, one accused was found to be unfit to stand trial and was sent to the National Psychiatric Hospital for psychiatric treatment for six months after which he is to be examined to determine whether he can stand trial. In the other matter, Justice Insanally ordered that the accused be taken back to prison based on evidence taken from a medical doctor that he was unstable, non-cooperative and delusional. She directed the jury to return a formal verdict that the accused is insane and unfit to stand trial and ordered that the accused be treated for three months after which he should be reassessed to determine if he is fit to stand trial.

The Berbice February 2014 Criminal Assizes commenced on 4th February and is currently in progress. So far one matter for the offence of Murder has been presented and completed before Madam Justice Diana Insanally. The accused pleaded guilty to the lesser offence of Manslaughter and was sentenced to 11 years imprisonment. Another charge for the offence of murder is presently in progress.