

OFFICE OF THE MONROE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

The Honorable Brian P. Green, District Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jury Finds Derrick Van Epps Guilty of Attempted Murder in the 2nd Degree as a Hate Crime and Assault in the 2nd Degree as a Hate Crime

Rochester, NY- On Tuesday, May 26, 2026, a Monroe County jury convicted 31-year-old Derrick Van Epps of Attempted Murder in the 2nd Degree as a Hate Crime and Assault in the 2nd Degree as a Hate Crime.

On June 23, 2025, at approximately 11:50AM, a young man was hiking on a trail in the Town of Perinton. The victim passed Derrick Van Epps on the trail and exchanged pleasantries. After the two men passed each other, Derrick Van Epps turned around and violently stabbed the victim from behind, knocked him to the ground and continued to stab him with the knife. The victim fought off the attacker and escaped. Derrick Van Epps fled the park following the assault.

The victim searched for assistance, before cutting through the trail to a neighbor's house, who called 911. The victim was transported to the hospital, where he received treatment for his injuries.

Following the report, the Monroe County Sheriff's Office and the Town of Perinton Safety and Security Department began looking for the defendant. A Town security employee located Derrick Van Epps driving into a nearby park and he was apprehended by Monroe County Sheriff's Deputies. After the Monroe County Sheriff's Office conducted a thorough investigation, it was revealed that Derrick Van Epps targeted the victim, who was a complete stranger, based on the color of his skin. The defendant was charged with Attempted Murder in the 2nd Degree as a Hate Crime.

The case was prosecuted by Special Assistant District Attorney Stephen Ryck, of the Major Felony Bureau.

“Today’s conviction delivers justice for a young man who was targeted and nearly murdered simply because of the color of his skin,” said Assistant District Attorney Stephen Ryck. “This was a brutal, unprovoked act of violence fueled by hate and racism. Thanks to the exceptional work of the Monroe County Sheriff’s Office and the Town of Perinton Safety and Security Department, this dangerous defendant was quickly identified and apprehended before he could harm anyone else. Most importantly, we are incredibly grateful to the victim, whose courage, resilience, and willingness to relive this traumatic experience in court made today’s verdict possible. While no conviction can erase the physical and emotional scars left behind by this attack, we hope this verdict provides a measure of justice and accountability for the victim and his loved ones.”

“There is absolutely no place in Monroe County for hate-fueled violence, racism, or acts of terror against members of our community,” said Monroe County District Attorney Brian Green. “Derrick Van Epps targeted this victim because of the color of his skin and carried out a senseless, horrifying attack that could have ended a young man’s life. This conviction sends a clear message that hate crimes will be prosecuted aggressively and that those who commit acts of racist violence will be held fully accountable.”

Derrick Van Epps will be sentenced on July 9, 2026, in front of New York State Supreme Court Justice Stephen Miller.

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