

OFFICE OF THE MONROE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

The Honorable Brian P. Green, District Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Derrick Van Epps Sentenced to 25 Years for Attempted Murder in the 2nd Degree as a Hate Crime and Assault in the 2nd Degree as a Hate Crime

Rochester, NY- On Friday, July 10, 2026, New York State Supreme Court Justice Stephen Miller sentenced 31-year-old Derrick Van Epps to 25 years in the New York State Department of Corrections plus 5 years of post-release supervision, the maximum sentence allowed by law. He was previously convicted by a jury 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 sentence ensures that Derrick Van Epps will spend decades in prison for a vicious, hate-fueled attack that forever changed the life of an innocent young man," said Special Assistant District Attorney Stephen Ryck. "This defendant targeted a complete stranger because of the color of his skin and carried out an unprovoked act of extraordinary violence. While no sentence can erase the trauma the victim endured, this maximum sentence reflects the seriousness of this hate crime and holds the defendant accountable for his vile actions. I am grateful to the victim for his remarkable courage throughout this case, as well as to the Monroe County Sheriff's Office and the Town of Perinton Safety and Security Department for their outstanding investigation that brought this dangerous individual to justice."

"There is no room in Monroe County for hatred, racism, or violence motivated by prejudice," said Monroe County District Attorney Brian Green. "This defendant attempted to take a young man's life solely because of the color of his skin. Today's maximum sentence sends a clear and unmistakable message: if you commit a hate crime in our community, you will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Every person deserves to feel safe in our community regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic. We remain committed to protecting that principle and seeking justice for every victim of hate-driven violence."

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