



## Dumont man found not guilty of mom's killing

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A Dumont man charged with killing his mother with a fire poker in 2022 has been found not guilty by reason of insanity by a Superior Court judge. After the conclusion of a bench trial, Judge Nina Remson on Jan. 13 found that Patrick Maupai met the legal standard for insanity when he killed his mother. A bench trial is when a judge, rather than a jury, hears evidence and decides the outcome.

Remson said the fact that Maupai called 911 and expressed remorse for killing his mother “does not change the doctor’s opinion that [Maupai] did not understand the nature and quality of his actions ... when he was committing that offense.”

He was arrested in July 2022 after he called police to say he had attacked his mother, 79-year-old Linda Maupai. When police arrived, she was found in the living room with multiple lacerations on her face and covered in blood. She was still alive when officers got to the home, and they performed CPR after she stopped breathing, continuing until emergency workers arrived. Linda Maupai was taken to a hospital, where she died of her injuries. Patrick Maupai was charged with first-degree murder and weapons counts.

In her decision, Remson noted that forensic psychologist Gianni Pirelli examined Maupai. The doctor testified that Maupai had been bullied in school and had suffered a broken nose in fourth grade, resulting in chronic breathing problems. Since high school, he had been using a Vicks inhaler, but he recently began to “abuse the inhaler,” using it hundreds of times daily, Pirelli said. Maupai began exhibiting psychological problems in his 20s, hearing voices telling him to grind his teeth down, which he would do with a nail clipper, Remson said. Maupai also told Pirelli that command auditory hallucinations would tell him to hurt himself more than others, and he would make small cuts on his arms and neck.

Remson said Maupai told Pirelli his mother would make fun of his teeth, yet he described his relationship with his mother as “great” and said they were “the best of friends.” The judge said he was socially isolated and spent most of his time with his mother, but he did have a prior incidence of violence in 2011, when his sister turned

up the heat in the home and he assaulted her. He was admitted to Bergen Regional Medical Center, now known as Bergen New Bridge Medical Center, and stayed for 19 days. Maupai was diagnosed with impulse control disorder and suspected bipolar disorder and received mental health treatment from 2011 until 2015. He then remained untreated until the killing in 2022. While in jail, he was diagnosed with schizophrenia and an intellectual disability.

The judge said it was an argument over Maupai's teeth cutting and grinding that led to the homicide. Maupai had asked his mother for dental procedures and she had refused. Maupai told the doctor she pushed and hit him, and he heard a "strong male voice" saying to attack her, so he picked up the fireplace poker and hit her in the face with it. Maupai also told Pirelli he had a visual hallucination of himself "sad and crying and yelling and then he saw his mother bleeding on the floor."

Pirelli concluded that Maupai suffered from "schizoaffective disorder and other specified disruptive impulse control and conduct disorder," Remson said. Pirelli opined that these conditions and the lack of treatment impaired Maupai's ability to understand that what he did was wrong. Some of the doctors disagreed with specific diagnoses, but Remson said they were "very nuanced distinctions that said [Maupai] had a prior diagnosis of bipolar disorder and schizophrenia and was not previously diagnosed with intermittent explosive disorder."

One of the doctors believed that Maupai wasn't impaired and understood what he was doing, but Remson disagreed. Maupai will receive long-term psychiatric treatment at the Anne Klein Forensic Center, a psychiatric hospital in Trenton, and injectable medication.

Remson set a date for a hearing on July 14 at 9 a.m. to determine whether Maupai should remain at the Anne Klein Forensic Center.

The success of insanity pleas is rare, and the cases often are not heard before a jury. Kip Cornwell, a law professor at Seton Hall University, said the standard for an insanity plea is "really high" and there is a difference between being "severely mentally ill and severely mentally ill such that you don't understand what you did was wrong." According to a study by the National Institute of Public Health that looked at eight states, including New Jersey, an insanity plea was entered in less than 1% of criminal cases.