

Michigan Man Convicted of Murdering Pro-Life Activist, Businessman

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✖ A Michigan man has been convicted of murdering a pro-life activist and a gravel pit owner and sentenced to life in prison without parole.

A jury deliberated for four hours Thursday before finding Harlan Drake, 33, guilty on two counts of first-degree premeditated murder in the fatal shootings of pro-life activist Jim Pouillon and gravel pit owner Mike Fuoss. Each count carries a sentence of life in prison with no chance of parole.

Drake admitted to killing Pouillon and Fuoss last September but claimed he was insane and should not be found guilty, Saginaw, Michigan's WNEM TV 5 reported.

Pouillon, 63, was shot dead across the street from a high school in Owosso, Mich., where he regularly protested abortion. On the day he was killed, he was holding a sign showing the picture of a chubby-cheeked baby and the word "life" on one side and an image of an aborted baby and the word "abortion" on the other.

Fuoss was shot 17 times in his office outside Owosso.

Prosecutors said Drake was out to avenge his mother when he drove by the school and shot Pouillon then gunned down Fuoss, his mother's former boss, WNEM reported.

During the trial, Drake said he asked to see the autopsy reports "so I could see what my aim was like," according to WNEM TV 5. He said he considered committing suicide after the shootings but didn't want to mess up his wife's truck.

Defense attorney Robert Ashley said Drake has been mentally ill since a 2004 traffic accident in which his truck hit a car, killing two teens. Police determined Drake was not at fault.

Some pro-life leaders have described Pouillon as a martyr and promised to intensify their activism in his memory.