

'Caveman' Lee found guilty but mentally ill

By Wayne Paul
staff writer

One-time middleweight contender William "Caveman" Lee Jr., a former member of Detroit's famed Kronk Boxing Team, has been found guilty but mentally ill in the Aug. 4 armed robbery of an Avon Township savings and loan.

An Oakland County Circuit Court jury recommended a lenient sentence for the 28-year-old Detroit, who faces a maximum sentence of life in prison on the bank robbery charge.

In finding Lee guilty but mentally ill, jurors recommended that he receive psychiatric counseling while in prison. Jurors also found Lee guilty but mentally ill on a separate charge involving possession of a firearm in the commission of a felony. Conviction of the charge carries a mandatory two-year prison sentence.

Lee will face sentencing Friday, May 25, before Circuit Judge Frederick Ziem. Following the jurors' verdict, handed down Tuesday morning, Lee was released on \$3,000 bond. A court spokesman said bond was posted by Kronk manager-trainer Emanuel Steward, who also paid for Lee's defense.

OAKLAND COUNTY assistant prosecutor Lawrence Bunting said he was satisfied with the verdict.

"I thought the jury executed its charges well," Bunting said. Bunting had asked the jury to restrain from being overly sympathetic to Lee because of other misfortunes suffered by the ex-athlete.

"He was someone who reached for the brass ring and missed. But that's not the issue," Bunting said to jurors.

In finding Lee guilty but mentally ill, jurors determined that he exhibited either "a substantial disorder of thought or mood or an inability to cope with normal demands of life," as Ziem explained.

Jurors rejected other options that would have found Lee innocent by reason of insanity or would have found him guilty.

If Lee had been found innocent by reason of insanity, he would have been sent to the Michigan Forensic Center in Ypsilanti for examination. If a guilty verdict had been returned, jurors could not have recommended that Lee receive psychiatric counseling.

ated for about six hours over two days and the robbery reaching a decision about 11 a.m. Tuesday.

Defense attorneys acknowledged that Lee robbed the First Federal Savings and Loan of Oakland, 1460 Walton, but said a life-long series of misfortunes seriously affected his mental well-being.

The \$18,385 that police officers found in Lee's possession shortly after the stickup would be returned to the Savings and Loan, defense attorneys said.

Lee was depressed and suicidal at the time of the robbery, according to Dr. Michael Abramsky, a Birmingham-based psychologist who examined the Philadelphia native three times between late November and mid-December.

"He felt the future didn't hold much for him," Abramsky testified.

ACCORDING to the psychologist, Lee had also attempted to kill himself before the robbery.

"He drove to a secluded spot in the Five Mile/Telegraph area and put the gun in his mouth, but he couldn't pull the trigger," Abramsky said. The idea of entering the savings and loan came from a television movie in

which Lee saw bank robbers gunned down by bank guards, Abramsky testified.

Lee had twice attempted suicide as a teen-ager, the psychologist testified, and his cousin and brother had committed suicide between mid-1981 and mid-1983.

Defense attorneys James Feinberg and Arthur Greenstone of Birmingham argued that Lee entered the savings and loan in hopes of being shot to death by guards (at the time of the robbery, however, no guards were on duty).

A KEY PROSECUTION witness, who also examined Lee, disagreed with Abramsky's analysis.

Dr. Gary Hawk of the state forensic center testified that Lee exhibited a life-long pattern of depression.

"A person with severe depression would not be in training for a championship fight," Hawk testified.

"Lee had the desire and decided to do what he did," Hawk added, referring to the robbery.

Lee's depression was traced, in part, to his knockout 87 seconds into the first round of a scheduled 15-round bout against middleweight champion Marvin Hagler and to subsequent drug-use allegations that surfaced afterward.

The New Jersey Athletic Commission suspended Lee's boxing license in July 1983 following allegations—never proven—that the fighter had been drugged during the Hagler fight.

TRACES of morphine and quinine were found in the post-fight urine specimen that Lee submitted.

Lee, however, steadfastly maintained the specimen was not his, a contention supported by Steward, who was among those testifying in Lee's behalf during the five-day trial.

Bunting argued that Lee intended to rob the savings and loan.

"If he wanted to get arrested, he should have gone to a big bank in Detroit," Bunting said. "You don't drive 30 minutes into the suburbs to rob a bank with only three employees (if you want to get arrested)."

Lee, the assistant prosecutor argued, made no attempt to be apprehended, wearing a ski mask throughout the robbery and even outside the savings and loan.

"After it was over, he got in his car and drove away," Bunting said. "He did a robbery just like a robbery should be done. He went in with a gun, a bag and a mask. In 3-5 minutes, he went out of there with \$18,000."

represent life-long patients among Lee and his relatives, Abramsky testified.

Feinberg said that Lee parked his battered brown station wagon directly in front of the savings and loan, where it could be easily seen. The ski mask, coupled with pulling the robbery in a predominantly white community, made the black ex-boxer an easy-to-spot suspect.

"I challenge you to come up with a plan that is worse than this for getting arrested and getting killed," Feinberg said to jurors.

He added that Lee's rifle was unloaded and never directly pointed at the four customers and three savings and loan employees inside the savings and loan at the time.

Seconds after Lee drove away, according to police reports, the money began smoking. A security pack containing tear gas and red dye had been placed, along with the money, in his gym bag.

About 10 minutes after the stickup—after two men with rifles near the savings and loan provided a description of the getaway car—Lee was pinned to the ground, offering no resistance to police officers, who converged on his car in Pontiac, according to the reports.

BUT FEINBERG argued that Lee made his arrest easy. Depression and suicide appeared to

Race to draw world-class bikers

By Sharon Dargy
staff writer

Troy's version of the "Grand Prix" is expected to draw 200 participants and several thousand spectators Thursday, May 17.

But instead of turbo-charged engines and sleek cars, the racers will pedal their way to victory in what has become part of the second-largest bicycling race in the United States.

It's a natural for southeastern Michigan, which has turned out the world champion cyclist, the current world title-holder, eight Olympic team riders and 54 national champions.

"Our eventual goal is to have a multi-stage race like the 'Tour de France,'" said Dale Hughes, race director for the Michigan Bike Federation. The bike federation, the Troy Chamber of Commerce and other civic groups are sponsoring the event.

"The Tour de France is a 24-day race over 2,000 miles. Every day is a different stage, and riders accumulate points as they go along."

THE TROY Cycling Classic will kick off a mini-

ature version of the French race. World-class racers and Olympic hopefuls will accumulate cycling "points" and prize money over the three-day event, "The Heritage Cup."

The race will follow a triangular course around the parking lot at the K mart International Headquarters, Big Beaver and Coolidge. Other races are Friday, May 18, in the Monroe street area of Greektown, Detroit, and Saturday, May 19, around Belle Isle.

A qualifying race for the U.S. Olympic riding team will be Saturday, May 12, at Camp Dearborn. Many of those riding to qualify will cycle to the three-stage race, Hughes believes. A 24-hour marathon ride will follow the Belle Isle race.

THE COORS Classic in Denver, an 11-day race, is the sport's other major U.S. event. It attracts participants from Europe, the Soviet Union and Cuba.

That's where we want to go. We expect all the Canadian and American Olympic hopefuls at our race and racers from about five European countries.

Racing fans will recognize several big-name riders at the Troy event. Tom Schuler of Birmingham, the 1980 Olympic gold medalist and a candidate for the '84 team, will face arch rival Jeff Pierce of Livonia. Sue Nourara of Flint, last year's national

champion and a two-time world class winner, will vie for a part of the \$100 in prize money. An individual racer could earn up to \$4,000-\$5,000 over three days, Hughes said.

"THIS IS THE first time women are going to be riding in the Olympics, and we're a power house in women's cycling," Hughes said. At least three of the riders selected for the women's Olympic cycling team will be from Michigan, he believes.

"Everyone looks to us in women's cycling. We have a good coach behind the riders — Mike Walden of the Michigan Bike Federation."

The Troy race will also give amateur riders and families a chance to exercise their biking skills. A "Tour de Course" leisure ride from 6-8:30 p.m. will allow the casual biker to try out the track. An amateur race starts at 8:30 p.m. A half-hour parade begins at 7 p.m. Riders may sign up for the events the day of the race.

WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL racing will start at about 7:30 p.m. A bike raffle and men's professional group will begin at 8:15 p.m.

Troy police will be on hand for bike safety checks, engraving identification numbers in bikes and to clock racers with a speed gun.

"Biking is the number two sport nationwide," Hughes said. "There are 72 million riders."

Only swimming draws more participants.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS • MAY 1984

- April 26 "I LOVE MOM" Contest - in 25 words or less enter your essay on why "I Love Mom." Entry blanks available at all stores. Prizes awarded.
- April 30 Spinal Health Care Week
- May 6 Basenji Dog Show
- May 12 Livonia Mall Remembers Mom - FREE carnations to first 1,000 mothers Mercy High School "Mercians" 1:00 & 2:00 p.m.
- May 17 Account on Homes Show
- May 26 Livonia Blooms Plant Sale - southwest parking lot - Sponsored by the Livonia Chamber of Commerce

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