NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HOWARD COUNTY
Contact: Yolanda Vazquez
410-313-2108
yvazquez@howardcountymd.gov

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Columbia Mom Sentenced to Two Decades in Prison for Attempted Murder of Two Teens

Ellicott City, MD —Dieneba Sekou Traore, age 48, of Columbia, MD, was sentenced to 30 years suspend all but 20 years in prison today for her role in the October 2024 shooting of two juveniles at a shopping center parking lot.

In June of 2025, following a two-week trial, Traore was found guilty by a Howard County jury of two counts of attempted second-degree murder, two counts of first-degree assault, two counts of firearm use in the commission of a crime of violence, and related conspiracy charges.

On October 12, 2024, around 9:10pm, officers from the Howard County Police Department responded to a call for a shooting at a retail shopping center located in the 8800 block of Centre Park Drive. Once on the scene, police found two young juveniles with gunshot wounds to their legs lying in a grassy area between the Giant shopping store and the nearby IHOP. Witnesses told police that they saw an individual fire shots at the victims before getting into the back passenger seat of a white SUV. After reviewing surveillance video of the area, police determined that the two shooting victims were among a group of four teens walking through the Giant Food parking lot. The white SUV was seen driving into the parking lot before the shooting and exiting the parking lot after the shooting. Police determined the vehicle was registered to Traore, who had reported to police that her son was the victim of an armed robbery that took place on October 7, 2024.

"This case is a tragic reminder of the dangers of taking the law into one's own hands," said State's Attorney Rich Gibson, Jr. "Vigilante justice has no place in Howard County, and it will not be tolerated. Instead of seeking lawful avenues for accountability, the defendant chose violence; leaving two young people seriously injured and a community shaken.

Today’s sentence reflects the seriousness of those actions and reaffirms our commitment to protecting our residents by ensuring that justice is carried out in the courtroom, not in the streets.”

Upon release from prison, Traore will be placed on five years of supervised probation.

This case was prosecuted by Senior Assistant State’s Attorneys Patricia Cecil and Tiffany Vaira.

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