

Treatment, not jail

DEAN PRITCHARD

Court Reporter

dpritchard@wpgsun.com

The case of a Winnipeg man who stabbed and beat an Assiniboine Park jogger has been referred to a psychiatric review board after a judge ruled yesterday he was not criminally responsible for his actions.

Twenty-one-year-old Anuj Sharma has been confined to the psychiatric unit of the Health Sciences Centre since November when he was arrested for the shocking assault on 63-year-old Lucien Debreuil.

Yesterday, Judge Murray Howell ruled Sharma — who has been diagnosed with schizophrenia — did not know what he was doing when he stabbed Debreuil in the stomach and back with a hunting knife and kicked him as he lay bleeding on the ground.



ANUJ SHARMA

Stabbed jogger, but 'not criminally responsible'

Howell referred the case to a psychiatric review board which will have 90 days to decide on a course of treatment for Sharma.

Debreuil had just finished an evening jog with his running club at Assiniboine Park and was returning to his car with a friend when Sharma emerged from the bushes and attacked him near the duck pond, Crown attorney Derek Coggan told court.

Sharma stabbed Debreuil once in the stomach and back, after which Debreuil managed to hobble 20 metres before collapsing to the ground. Sharma kicked Debreuil several times, telling him "You are going to die,"

Coggan said.

Debreuil gave Sharma his car keys in an effort to end the attack. When Sharma appeared confused by the offer, Debreuil asked him if he had "ever heard of Jesus," Coggan said.

One-fifth of liver removed

"Mr. Debreuil said at that point it looked like Mr. Sharma had been hit by a lightning bolt and he headed toward (Debreuil's) car and drove away."

Debreuil's jogging partner called 911 and police arrested Sharma in Debreuil's car a short time later.

In a statement to police, Sharma said he saw Debreuil and became convinced he was carrying drugs.

"He then proceeded to stab him, believing

he was ridding the world of drugs and alcohol," Coggan said.

Debreuil spent 20 days in hospital and had one-fifth of his liver removed. He has since made a full recovery with the exception of some minor nerve damage.

Prior to the attack, Sharma had been treated for depression and suffered from delusions but had not been yet diagnosed with schizophrenia. At the time of the attack he had stopped taking his prescribed medication.

"Mr. Sharma and his family are very thankful the consequences were not more serious," said defence lawyer Jason Miller. "Mr. Sharma is committed to his treatment, whatever it is."

Reached at home, Sharma's family declined to comment.



DEBREUIL