

Former Sons of Silence leader found guilty of drug possession

Kathryn Sosbe; Gazette Telegraph

The former president of the Sons of Silence, a nationwide motorcycle gang based in Colorado Springs, faces as much as 48 years in prison after a jury on Wednesday convicted him of drug possession and distribution.

Leonard Ray Shipley, 43, began to weep after the verdicts were read following about four hours of deliberation. He was convicted of distribution and possession of methamphetamines, possession of a grenade simulator and being a special offender for having both a deadly weapon and illegal drugs.

The jury found him not guilty of the petty offense of possession of marijuana.

Because the jury found him to be a special offender, Shipley will receive a minimum mandatory sentence of 24 years but could get as much as 48 years when he is sentenced July 17.

Sons of Silence has come under intense scrutiny since a man burst into one of the gang's hangouts, Jim & I's Star Bar on North Nevada Avenue, in 1993 and shot several people with an automatic weapon. One of the two people killed in the altercation was Paul "P.K." Klein, the bar manager and a member of Sons of Silence.

The suspect in the shooting, Eugene Baylis, is now in the fifth week of a death-penalty trial in Pueblo.

After Shipley's conviction Wednesday, 4th Judicial District Judge Gilbert Martinez revoked Shipley's bond and ordered him held pending sentencing.

Colorado Springs police arrested Shipley in August 1993 after an undercover investigation. When police raided Shipley's home near The Citadel mall, they found a pound of illegal methamphetamine, a stimulant commonly known as speed. The drug, according to police, was packaged for street sale in varying amounts.