

Teen gets 8 years in hostage incident

Says he planned it 'so that I would die'

By Bill Rankin
Staff writer

CUMMING, Ga. — A Forsyth County teenager was sentenced Tuesday to eight years in prison for kidnapping and aggravated assault after testifying he held his high school classmates hostage last September because he wanted to die.

"I thought I had everything worked out so that I would die," said Randy Addis, who held nine schoolmates hostage for five hours on Sept. 9 in a classroom at South Forsyth County High School.

The 17-year-old, who pleaded guilty to the charges in March, testified for more than an hour during a daylong sentencing



Randy Addis
Doctors urged psychiatric and other medical attention, not incarceration.

hearing. Addis said he meticulously planned the abduction, modeling the incident after the Stephen King novel "Rage."

"I thought I could go in and take kids hostage and no one would get hurt," he testified.

He said he planned to parade his hostages, hidden under a tarpaulin, to a bus outside the school. He told police he wanted the group to be driven to Savannah, then placed aboard a ship bound for international waters. But before he boarded, Addis said, he planned to remove the

cover to be in the open for police fire.

"Boom, there goes Randy," said the trembling youth. "I'd be shot in the head."

Superior Court Judge Richard C. Gault also sentenced Addis to 12 years' probation, during which he is banished from Forsyth County and is to receive psychiatric treatment.

"Unbelievable," said Addis's father, Larry, of the sentence. "This means we'll have to start over from square one when he gets out."

Psychiatrists testified they believe Addis had responded to treatment since September and needs psychiatric and other medical attention, not incarceration. They described Addis as a shy young man, who as a child was beaten by his father and persecuted by his peers because he is epileptic and overweight.

"It's my opinion that he is not a danger to society" said Dr. Robert J. Storms, chief forensic psychiatrist at Central State Hospital in Milledgeville. "He is certainly redeemable. . . . I believe he would not survive in a typical prison in this state."

Addis was suicidal and depressed at the time of the incident, Dr. Storms said. "He was living in a fantasy world, a lonely and isolated young man . . . crying out for help."

District Attorney Garry T. Moss recommended that Addis serve 10 years in prison and up to 30 more on probation. Although no one was injured during the abduction, some of the students were emotionally traumatized, Mr. Moss said.

He argued that the teen has exhibited a "progression of violence," first pointing a gun at people in a Cumming parking lot in 1988 and, a month before the high school incident, breaking into a neighbors' house, stealing guns and jewelry.



A student is comforted after Randy Addis held nine schoolmates hostage at South Forsyth County High School last September.