

## **Jury convicts man of lesser charges in Elkton attempted murder case**



ELKTON — A man charged with attempted murder and other major offenses in the wake of him and at least one other person firing gunshots indiscriminately into an Elkton townhouse in May 2020 — seriously wounding a boy in the knee and a man in the lower back — is facing up to 19 years in prison after a jury convicted him of lesser charges on Monday.

The defendant, Jason Tyler Holland, 28, of North East, maintained at trial that he acted in self-defense after a man had fired a long gun out the front door of a townhouse at 122 Huntsman Dr. shortly before 3 p.m. on May 11, 2020. Represented by Elkton-based lawyer C. Evan Rollins, Holland testified on his own behalf during the week-long trial.

Jurors deliberated a total of about two and a half hours over two days before finding Holland guilty of possession of a handgun by a convicted felon, which is his most serious conviction in the criminal case. The offense is punishable by up to 15 years in prison, with a mandatory five-year term.

The jury also convicted Holland of wearing, carrying and/or transporting a firearm and of illegal possession of ammunition. Those convictions carry maximum sentences of three years and one year respectively.

Jurors, however, acquitted Holland of all charges of first-degree assault, second-degree assault and reckless endangerment. Those offenses are punishable by up to 25 years, 10 years and five years in prison respectively. In addition, the jury acquitted Holland of conspiracy to commit first-degree assault, which carries a maximum 25-year sentence.

The jury did not deliberate over some charges, including use of a firearm in the commission of a felony or crime of violence, for example, because the verdict sheet instructed the panel to skip over them if it had found the defendant “not guilty” of certain preceding charges.

As for the attempted murder charges that had been filed against Holland, Cecil County Circuit Court Judge William W. Davis Jr. dismissed all of them at mid-trial in response to a defense motion. After the state had rested its case, Rollins, in his motion for acquittal, argued that prosecutors had failed to meet their burden of proof. Davis granted the defense motion, dismissing three counts each of attempted first-degree murder and attempted second-degree murder.

Holland’s sentencing is set for March 6.

One of Holland’s co-defendants — Robert Eugene Hammond IV, 26, of Elkton — is serving 30 years in prison sentences. Davis imposed those sentences on Hammond in February after finding him guilty of first-degree assault, use of a handgun in the commission of a felony or a crime of violence and eight other charges in September 2021 at the conclusion of a three-day-long bench trial. (Court records indicate that Hammond’s criminal case is on appeal.)

Hammond maintained self-defense, too, during his trial — but only through his attorney. Unlike Holland, Hammond opted not to testify in his own defense at trial.

Holland’s other co-defendant — Cody Allen Hammond, 21, of Port Deposit — is awaiting his jury trial, which is set for late January. He is facing 32 charges, including first-degree assault, reckless endangerment and three counts each of attempted first-degree murder and attempted second-degree murder, court records show.

Cody Hammond and Robert Hammond are brothers and Holland is their half-brother.

According to court records and trial testimony, Holland and Robert Hammond opened fire on the Huntsman Drive townhouse on May 11, 2020 — sending a total of 13 bullets ripping through walls and windows on both floors and all sides of the residence. Cody Hammond stands accused of firing indiscriminately into that townhouse, too.

One of the bullets that entered the townhouse wounded a 6-year-old boy in the knee, resulting in him undergoing at least two surgeries. Another one of those bullets wounded a 25-year-old man in the back. And another one of those bullets grazed a 31-year-old woman in the foot.

As did Robert Hammond, Holland maintained at trial that he was acting in self-defense, after a man inside that Huntsman Drive townhouse inexplicably and randomly fired a rifle several times

outwards from the front door of the dwelling. A nearby house was struck by the rounds, but no one was wounded. That man has not been charged in connection with the incident.

A home security camera yielded a video of that man — the homeowner — firing out the residence's front door. In addition, home security cameras provided footage of the co-defendants — all armed with handguns — walking to that Huntsman Drive residence some four minutes after the fact and opening fire.

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