

Man gets six years for role in Elkton triple-shooting incident



ELKTON — A judge sentenced a man to six years of incarceration — five of which are mandatory — on Monday for his lesser role during a May 2020 incident in which he and his two co-defendants fired gunshots into an Elkton townhouse — seriously wounding a boy in the knee and a man in the lower back.

The defendant — Jason Tyler Holland, now 28, of North East — maintained during his jury trial in December that he had acted in self-defense when he fired one warning shot, after a man inside a townhouse at 122 Huntsman Dr. inexplicably and randomly started shooting a .22 caliber rifle out his front door.

Those .22 caliber bullets struck objects in that general area, including a house on nearby Pheasant Drive, based on the physical evidence collected by investigators. A security camera videotaped parts of the shooting incident.

The man who fired that .22 caliber rifle out his front door for no apparent reason has not been charged.

Holland testified that he was nearby when he heard those gunshots, prompting him to run to a spot where he knew his brother kept a handgun and then to go to that Huntsman Dr. townhouse,

where he and his armed co-defendants converged and positioned themselves outside the residence.

According to Holland, he grabbed the stashed handgun and went to that Huntsman Drive townhouse because he believed that his brother might be in danger, although he provided no explanation for that belief.

At the outset of his criminal case, Holland faced 35 charges, including attempted first-degree murder and attempted second-degree murder.

The jury, however, concluded that Holland had acted in self-defense and found him guilty of these lesser charges: possession of a handgun by a felon or a person convicted of a disqualify crime, handgun on person, illegal possession of ammunition. It also found Holland guilty of illegal possession of a regulated firearm, which merged at sentencing.

SENTENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Holland has an extensive criminal record that includes second-degree assault convictions, which, in addition to resulting in him serving at least one prison sentence, prohibits him from possessing firearms and ammunition, according to Assistant State's Attorney Scott Lewis.

SENTENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Holland has an extensive criminal record that includes second-degree assault convictions, which, in addition to resulting in him serving at least one prison sentence, prohibits him from possessing firearms and ammunition, according to Assistant State's Attorney Scott Lewis.

Those wounds were not linked to Holland.

THE SENTENCE

Cecil County Circuit Court Judge William W. Davis Jr. imposed a maximum 15-year sentence on Holland for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon or a person with a disqualifying conviction and then suspended 10 years of the penalty — leaving Holland with a mandatory five-year prison term, which he will serve in a Maryland Department of Corrections prison.

Davis also imposed a three-year sentence on Holland for handgun on person and then suspended two years of that penalty, raising Holland's period of incarceration to six years. In addition, the judge imposed a consecutive, suspended one-year sentence for illegal possession of ammunition. From the bench, Davis acknowledged that the jury concluded that Holland had acted in self-defense, before he opined that Holland would not have had to defend himself at all if he hadn't left the safety of a nearby residence and injected himself into the unfolding situation at that Huntsman Drive residence.

The judge also emphasized that, before heading to that Huntsman Drive townhouse, Holland grabbed a gun — which Holland knows he is prohibited by law from possessing because of his criminal record.

“It’s a little deeper than you were at the wrong place at the wrong time,” Davis told Holland from the bench, after asking rhetorically why he left a safe place after hearing the gunshots, why he believed those gunshots would be placing his brother in danger and why he grabbed a gun before going to that Huntsman Drive townhouse.

Then the judge told Holland, “You kind of inserted yourself. You kind of went looking for it.”

Davis gave Holland credit for approximately 34 months that he had served as a pre-trial inmate, the last portion of which on home detention. The judge also told Rollins that, after Holland completes his mandatory five-year prison term, he would allow him to serve the remaining one year of incarceration on home detention.

Addressing the judge moments before sentencing, Holland started his allocution by apologizing to the victims in that shooting incident and emphasizing that he never intended for anyone to get injured.

Holland also told the judge that, but for the May 2020 incident resulting in his gun-related convictions, he has been on the right path since his 2018 prison release. Holland expressed that it is his desire to face his consequences, put this criminal matter behind him and move on with his life.

“I have objectives, goals. I know where I want to be,” Holland said.

Three character witnesses — Holland’s girlfriend, his employer and his jiu jitsu instructor — described him to the judge as a caring, focused and well-mannered person and father. “To know him is to love him,” Holland’s girlfriend told the judge.

HIS CO-DEFENDANTS

One of Holland’s co-defendants — his half-brother, Robert Eugene Hammond IV, 26, of Elkton — received a 30-year prison term from Davis in February 2022 for his role in the shooting incident, after that judge found 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 at the conclusion of a three-day-long bench trial. Hammond opted not to testify in his own defense at trial.

The other co-defendant, Cody Allen Hammond, now 21, is facing 32 charges, including attempted first-degree murder and attempted second-degree murder, and his jury trial is scheduled to start May 9. Cody Hammond, who was 18 at the time of the shooting incident, is Robert Hammond’s brother and Holland’s half-brother.

CECIL WHIG ARTICLE BY CARL HAMILTON 3/7/2023