



COUNTY of GALVESTON
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAN SENTENCED TO 30 YEARS FOR AGGRAVATED ROBBERY

July 2, 2015

GALVESTON – Today Judge Kerry Neves, in the 10th District Court, sentenced Dustin James Stevens to 30 years in the Institutional Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. A jury found Stevens guilty yesterday, following a three day trial, for Aggravated Robbery. Stevens was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Christopher Henderson and Xochitl Vandiver-Gaskin. Zach Fertitta represented the defendant.

The victim, Brandon Bischoff, testified that on December 15, 2012 he attended a party at a friend's house, in Santa Fe. While at the party, Stevens asked Bischoff for a ride to the store. Bischoff explained to the jury that prior to the party he had not previously met Stevens. On the way to the store, Stevens asked Bischoff to detour to a friend's house so that Stevens could get money for the store. Stevens requested Bischoff pull into a driveway, at which time Stevens pulled out a gun and pointed it at Bischoff, requesting Bischoff to get out of the vehicle. Bischoff began to exit the vehicle but then pushed back against Stevens, moving the gun. Bischoff and Stevens struggled over the gun, causing the gun to discharge inside the truck. Bischoff was able to gain possession of the gun and attempted to exit the vehicle. Stevens jumped onto Bischoff's back and a second struggle over the gun occurred outside of the vehicle, resulting in the gun being discharged again and Stevens regaining possession of the gun. Stevens then used the gun to beat Bischoff, knocking Bischoff unconscious, and then fleeing in Bischoff's vehicle. Bischoff also testified that once he regained consciousness, he crawled to a neighboring house and requested assistance in calling the police. Bischoff was later taken to the hospital for treatment of his injuries, resulting in stitches to his lip and to the back of his head.

The State also called Stevens' mother to testify about her statement to the police. She testified that after being told, by the police, that Stevens was in trouble she text messaged and then called Stevens. During her conversation with Stevens, Stevens admitted to using a gun to beat Bischoff and to taking his vehicle.

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The Defendant called Nattie Stevens, his ex-wife, to testify. She testified that on the night of the incident Stevens could not have been involved because she saw him pull into his driveway, in his own vehicle, around the time the incident would have occurred. The State challenged that testimony with postings from her Facebook page, showing she posted that Stevens was with her later that night after having been dropped off at her home sometime between 8 pm and 9 pm. The State also questioned her about her offering to pay the victim money if he requested for the State to drop the charges against Stevens.

The jury took about one hour to deliberate before finding Stevens guilty. Stevens elected to have Judge Neves determine his punishment.

The Defendant faced a minimum prison sentence of 15 years because of one felony enhancement for a 2009 conviction for Burglary of a Habitation. During the punishment stage, the State presented evidence that, in addition to the enhancement, Stevens had prior felony convictions for Escape and Burglary of Habitation, both in 2009. At the close of punishment and after a review of the evidence, Judge Kerry Neves sentenced Dustin James Stevens to 30 years in prison.

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