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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Man Sentenced to 45 Years for Aggravated Robbery

GALVESTON – Today, James Joseph Washington, 20, was sentenced to 45 and 25 years, concurrently, in the Institutional Division of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice for two felony counts of Aggravated Robbery.

On Monday, April 25, 2016, trial began in the 56th District Court. During trial, the State presented witness testimony and other evidence that between the hours of 4 am and 5 am on Tuesday, February 17, 2015 Washington and three other men entered a Galveston home and robbed the residents at gun point. Two of the victims, Amie Maynard and Chance Maynard, testified, recounting for the jury the events that took place.

Amie, Chance, and Lerry Hollis, the third victim, were asleep when then they were awoken at gun point and forced into their living room. The three male intruders then bound their hands and feet with duct tape and wrapped their heads in plastic bags. When Washington attempted to strangle Amie because the men could not get her to quiet down, Chance was able to break free, intending to help his mother, but instead ran when she yelled at him to get out. Chance ran towards the back of the house, making it out the backdoor, and jumped from the second story balcony into the neighboring backyard. While the men were going after Chance, Lerry seized the opportunity to escape and ran towards the front door. It is then that shots were fired and the four men fled the area. Aime was shot in the back and Lerry was shot in the lower abdomen but was still able to get to a nearby neighbor's house to seek help.

Chance, while observing the men, recognized them as Washington, Antonio Elizondo, and Kaleb Jakobi Jamal Thomas. Chance testified that he had recently become friends with Elizondo after the two met at work. Washington, Thomas, and Clifton Maurice Dixon were introduced to Chance by Elizondo the Friday before the home invasion.

During the subsequent investigation and apprehension of the defendants, Elizondo and Thomas gave statements to police implicating themselves and each other. Elizondo testified that

the group stopped in Houston to secure a second gun and at a Wal-Mart where they purchased duct tape, gloves, and bandanas.

The jury heard closing arguments Monday afternoon, returning just before noon on Tuesday with a guilty verdict. Washington faced a punishment range of 5 to 99 years, or Life, in prison for each charge. The State submitted prior judgments showing Washington was currently on deferred probation in Arkansas for three felony charges; Burglary of a Habitation, Theft of a Firearm, and Possession of Marijuana with Intent to Deliver.

Amie Maynard testified, describing to the jury how her life had forever changed. She testified that she is only 40 years old and she will never walk again, explaining that she is now paralyzed from the chest down. The State asked the jury to consider both Washington's criminal history and his actions on February 17, 2015. ADA Joseph Frank asked the jury to start at Life and to not go below a fifty year punishment. ADA Frank focused on Washington's criminal evolution and how in Arkansas Washington broke into a home and stole a gun and then this time he instead brought a gun to a home invasion.

The jury deliberated all morning, returning shortly before noon today with a verdict assessing Washington's punishment at 45 years and 25 years. Washington will not be eligible for parole until at least half, or 23 years, of his sentence has been served.

Washington was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Joseph Frank and Jennifer Ott, in the 56th District Court, with Judge Lonnie Cox presiding. The investigation was conducted by the Galveston Police Department.

In March 2016, both Elizondo and Thomas each pled guilty to three charges of Aggravated Robbery. They are awaiting punishment hearings, in which the court will determine their sentences. The three Aggravated Robbery charges against Dixon are still pending. The co-defendants' cases are also in the 56th District Court.