

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—NOV. 09, 2018

An Austin County jury convicted Travis Bluntson, 37, of Wharton County, Texas of Attempted Capital Murder of a Peace Officer on Thursday, November 8, 2018 after 4 days of trial.

The jury then sentenced him to 99 years in prison and a \$10,000.00 fine in District Judge Jeff Steinhauser's court.

Bluntson was charged with shooting at Sealy Police Officer Eric Gum while Bluntson fled a traffic stop in Sealy, Texas on March 13, 2012.

Bluntson's trial had been delayed several times in the last six years, in part because the Austin County District Attorney's Office had several serious felony cases with child victims that were tried first.

First Assistant District Attorney Brandy Robinson presented the case with aid from Assistant District Attorney Ben Nystrom and Legal Assistant Lisa Tobola. Defense attorneys Calvin Garvie and Annie Scott represented the defendant.

The State presented fourteen witnesses and close to 100 exhibits through the course of trial to prove that Bluntson shot at the officer from a black rental car as Bluntson fled from a traffic stop. The bullet struck the officer's windshield but missed the officer.

Evidence showed Bluntson then wrecked his vehicle near I-10 and fled to a motel in Wharton, Texas.

The defendant was identified by Sealy Police Officer Bryant, who still had Bluntson's driver's license from the traffic stop. The defense argued it may have been a case of mistaken identity.

The jury deliberated approximately 45 minutes before returning with its verdict of guilty on Wednesday. Bluntson elected to have the jury decide his punishment.

On Thursday, the State offered evidence that Bluntson had a history of previous felonies, including an aggravated assault with a deadly weapon in 1999. The victim from that assault, Shane Stavena, testified in punishment.

The State also presented evidence that the Texas Rangers found illegal narcotics in Bluntson's Wharton County home while they were investigating the Sealy shooting. In 2013 a Wharton County jury handed Bluntson 4 life sentences, a 20 year sentence, and a 2 year sentence on those charges.

After deliberating about 10 minutes, the Austin County jury sentenced Bluntson to the maximum punishment possible: 99 years and \$10,000.00 fine.

Bluntson has been eligible for parole annually on his Wharton County drug cases since they were non-violent. However, since his Austin County case included a finding that he committed the crime with a deadly weapon, he will not be eligible for parole until he has served 30 calendar years on his Austin County sentence.

First Assistant District Attorney Brandy Robinson stated, "Police Officer Eric Bryant was almost killed in the line of duty that night in 2012. He handled himself with the highest level of professionalism during a dangerous high speed chase and did everything possible to keep the community safe."

"We're grateful to have Officer Bryant and other officers like him continuing to serve in Austin County," Robinson added.

District Attorney Travis Koehn stated, "The Texas Rangers, Fort Bend County Crime Scene Investigators, Department of Public Safety, and Sealy Police Department all worked tirelessly to bring the jury the evidence needed to make the right decision."

"Bluntson is a particularly dangerous criminal. There is no doubt the citizens of Austin County and surrounding counties will be safer with him behind bars."