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Jury Verdicts Reached After Two-Month, Four-Incident Robbery, Attempted Murder, and Shooting Trial

(Bakersfield) - Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer announced a jury verdict in a significant gang attempted murder case today.

On March 28, 2023, after a two-month jury trial in a case prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Cyrus Shahbazian, a Kern County jury convicted Jayden Christopher Laughlin of over twenty serious or violent felonies including Attempted Premeditated Murder, for a series of gang-related shootings that occurred between October 2019 and June 2022. The jury also found true that Laughlin discharged a firearm resulting in great bodily injury for the November 9, 2019 shooting.

The first incident occurred during the early afternoon hours of October 19, 2019 when eight juvenile victims were skateboarding at Riverwalk Park. Laughlin and his gang associates approached the juvenile victims in the amphitheater area, displayed a firearm, and demanded the victims' phones, money and wallets. Laughlin's gang associates stood guard and blocked the victims from fleeing. After robbing the victims, Laughlin and his two associates fled the area. The victims recognized Laughlin as "Jaybo," a local rap artist. Officers from the Bakersfield Police Department were able to identify Laughlin as "Jaybo" and a warrant was issued for his arrest.

Roughly three weeks later, on November 9, 2019, another victim was walking to his family's house when he spotted Laughlin in the front yard of a residence in the company of several documented Warlord Piru gang members. The victim attempted to avoid the group by turning down a side street and walking through an alleyway. Undeterred, Laughlin gave chase and confronted the victim in the alley, stating that the victim had "disrespected the set." Laughlin then fired six rounds, striking the victim in the arm and hip, before fleeing the area. Officers with the Bakersfield Police Department were immediately dispatched to the scene and Laughlin was arrested as he was being driven away from the area.

Both the October 19, 2019 incident and the November 9, 2019 incident occurred when Laughlin was 17 years old. The cases were initially filed in juvenile court, but the District Attorney's Office petitioned, and the court permitted transfer to adult court in light of the circumstances of the cases. When transferred to adult court, bail on the two combined incidents was set at \$196,500, which Laughlin posted on August 14, 2020, securing his release pending the trial.

Another incident occurred on May 25, 2022, where a victim and his 5-year-old daughter were returning home from a doctor's appointment on Wilson Road when Laughlin cut him off while driving erratically. As the victim was taking photographs of Laughlin and his vehicle to report Laughlin's driving to law enforcement, Laughlin fired seven rounds, striking the victim's vehicle four times. Two rounds struck nearby houses in the area of Edmonton St. and Capella Ct. Based on photographs taken by the victim and video surveillance from neighboring residences, officers with the Bakersfield Police Department were able to identify Laughlin and a warrant was issued for his arrest.

A week later, officers from the Arvin Police Department arrested Laughlin on the outstanding warrant at the DMV as Laughlin was attempting to "subplate" his vehicle, which is an attempt to acquire a new license plate number. Laughlin posted an *additional* \$220,000 bail for the May 25, 2022 incident on June 2, 2022, again securing his release.

On June 17, 2022, another victim was walking along Stockdale Highway to his mother's house when Laughlin and his gang associate drove up next to the victim and began "banging" on him. Laughlin pointed a large, AR-15 style rifle at the victim and threatened to shoot him. Officers from the BPD again identified, located, and arrested Laughlin near the location of the incident.

The District Attorney's Office requested that bail be denied entirely in light of the repeated violent incidents, and Laughlin's continued criminality after posting high-bail amounts on the previous incidents. Superior Court Judge Chad Louie granted the request, denying any further bail opportunities for Laughlin, who remained in-custody since his arrest on the evening of June 17, 2022.

District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer commented on the convictions, stating that "Jayden Laughlin engaged in a veritable years-long crime spree that ends today. Over the course of 4 incidents, Laughlin victimized more than a dozen members of the community, opened fire multiple times and is a prime example of why bail determinations are so important to public safety."

Sentencing is scheduled for April 26, 2023 in front of the Honorable Judge Dulcich where Laughlin faces a sentence of more than 90 years to life.

Jayden Laughlin:

