



OFFICE OF THE STATE ATTORNEY

SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR MONROE COUNTY

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PLANTATION KEY, May 29, 2018 – A Key West man convicted in April of attempted murder of a police officer on Stock Island was sentenced May 29 to two consecutive terms of life in prison plus another 15 years, also to be served consecutively.

On April 25, a six-person jury found Timothy Eugene Thomas, 27, guilty of the attempted-murder charge, plus burglary of a dwelling armed with a firearm and fleeing or attempting to elude law enforcement, all felonies. He also was convicted of petit theft for stealing a license plate, a misdemeanor.

Monroe County Circuit Court Judge Luis Garcia handed down the life terms for the attempted murder and burglary with a gun. The fleeing-and-eluding charge landed Thomas the 15-year term. For the stolen plate, he got 60 days in county jail with credit for time served. Assistant state attorneys Gail Conolly and Colleen Dunne prosecuted the case.

On Oct. 24, 2015, Thomas got into a shootout with then-Monroe County Sheriff's Office Deputy Joshua Gordon following a short car chase on Stock Island. Gordon, now serving as a deputy with the St. Johns County Sheriff's Office in North Florida, was saved by his bullet-proof vest after being struck in the chest with a .38-caliber bullet.

At sentencing, defense attorney Kevin McCarthy sought a retrial, maintaining there was insufficient evidence to prove guilt. Garcia denied the motion.

In a statement read into the court record by Sheriff's Office Sgt. David Lariz, who backed up Gordon the night of the shooting, Gordon said Thomas had "pure evil intentions" and that he "chose a path of crime and violence."

The night of Oct. 24, 2015, Key West police put out a be-on-the-lookout notice for a black Mustang. Gordon saw the car heading out of the city and followed it north on U.S. 1, according to testimony. The driver turned right onto MacDonald Avenue and Gordon continued to follow planning to make a traffic stop because the Mustang had a reported stolen license plate attached.

At one point, the Mustang driver, Thomas, turned out the lights on the car and tried to speed away, according to a police dash camera. Gordon then activated

his emergency lights and siren and pursued. The pursuit ended when Thomas crashed into a stop sign at 3rd Street.

At trial, Dunne and Conolly presented dash video showing Thomas opening the driver's door of the Mustang and raising his left hand while looking at Gordon. Gordon shouted commands at Thomas, who then, the video shows, lowered himself back into the car. He quickly re-emerged with a handgun and started shooting at Gordon, who then shot back.

One of Thomas' bullets struck Gordon in the chest, but a trauma plate inserted into his vest blocked the bullet. Evidence presented at trial included the vest with the bullet hole.

Lariz had arrived as backup and Thomas, back inside the Mustang, then was able to dislodge the car from where it crashed and sped off. Gordon and Lariz pursued after gathering equipment from the ground. The Mustang was found a few blocks away, abandoned.

The next day, Oct. 25, 2015, Key West Police Detective Darnell Sealey received a tip about Thomas' location and after negotiating a surrender, Thomas was arrested at a house on Von Phister Street in Key West. Two guns, including a .9 mm Glock, were found under the house. The burglary conviction is for illegally entering that house.

Thomas' defense had claimed self-defense, contending Gordon started firing first. But video played at trial disputes that.

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