

Office of the Kane County State's Attorney



JOSEPH H. McMAHON

State's Attorney

Kane County Judicial Center
37W777 Route 38 Suite 300
St. Charles, Illinois 60175

General Offices: (630) 232-3500
Contact:
Christopher Nelson (630) 232-3500

AURORA MAN GETS 22-YEAR PRISON TERM FOR PAIR OF EAST SIDE SHOOTINGS ON LABOR DAY WEEKEND 2011

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An Aurora man has been sent to prison for firing a handgun at perceived street gang rivals in separate midday incidents on Labor Day weekend last year.

Alejandro Rodriguez, 21 (d.o.b. 10-25-1991), of the 1300 block of Indian Avenue, Aurora, was sentenced Wednesday, Dec. 19, 2012, by Circuit Judge David R. Akemann to 22 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections.

Rodriguez was convicted Nov. 8, 2012, by a Kane County jury, of two counts of armed violence, each a Class X felony, one count of aggravated discharge of a firearm within 1,000 feet of a school, a Class X felony, one count of aggravated discharge of a firearm, a Class 1 felony, and one count of unlawful possession of a firearm by a street gang member, a Class 2 felony.

At about 3:30 p.m. Sept. 3, 2011, Rodriguez, a street gang member, was a passenger in a late 1990s grey Toyota Camry being driven by a second man through Aurora's near-east side. In the vicinity of North State and Kane streets they encountered a person whom they believed to be a rival street gang member. Rodriguez began to argue with the man, and then pulled out a 22-caliber Smith & Wesson revolver and fired three shots at the victim. The shots missed the victim but instead struck a nearby house and a vehicle that was parked in its driveway.

Rodriguez and his driver then fled in the Toyota. They stopped a short time later in the vicinity of Beach and Columbia streets when they encountered a second man whom they believed to be a rival street gang member. Rodriguez fired another three shots from the Smith & Wesson at the second victim. The shots again missed the victim and again struck a nearby house and car.

The men again fled in the Toyota and a witness called 911. After a brief search of the neighborhood, Rodriguez was arrested a short time later in possession of five rounds of ammunition for the Smith & Wesson. During a subsequent search of his residence, police found more than 300 rounds ammunition for the Smith & Wesson.

No one was injured in either shooting, which was motivated by Rodriguez's wishes to improve his standing in his street gang.

The sentence is 22 years for the armed violence charges, 10 years for the aggravated discharge of a firearm charges, and five years for the firearm possession charge. The terms are to be served concurrently.

According to Illinois law, Rodriguez is eligible for day-for-day sentencing. Rodriguez was given credit for at least 474 days served in the Kane County jail.

"The community was put in great danger by Mr. Rodriguez's reckless acts of gang violence," Kane County State's Attorney Joe McMahon said. "This office will continue to aggressively prosecute and seek harsh sentences for such gang activity to protect the community.

"Thanks to Sgt. Alfredo Dean and investigators Abel Villanueva, Dave Tellner and Greg Christoffel of the Aurora Police Department, and to Kane County Assistant State's Attorneys Alex Bederka and Jon McKay."