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AURORA MAN FACES MINIMUM 20-YEAR PRISON TERM FOR PAIR OF EAST SIDE SHOOTINGS ON LABOR DAY WEEKEND 2011

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An Aurora man faces a minimum sentence of 20 years in prison after he was convicted last week for firing a handgun at perceived street gang rivals in separate midday incidents during Labor Day weekend last year.

Alejandro Rodriguez, 21 (d.o.b. 10-25-1991), of the 1300 block of Indian Avenue, Aurora, was convicted Thursday, 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.

Circuit Judge David R. Akemann set Rodriguez's next court appearance for 1:30 p.m. Dec. 18, 2012, for post-trial motions and sentencing. Rodriguez faces a sentence of between 20 and 60 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections.

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 the street gang.

"These were brazen acts of gang violence carried out in broad daylight on a holiday weekend that put the safety of the public in grave danger," Kane County State's Attorney Joe McMahon said. "Motivated solely by his desire to improve his rank in a street gang, Mr. Rodriguez showed absolutely no regard for anyone. Clearly, our community is safer with Mr. Rodriguez behind bars.

"My thanks to Sgt. Alfredo Dean and investigators Abel Villanueva, Dave Tellner and Greg Christoffel of the Aurora Police Department for their diligence in investigating this case and for their dedicated assistance in helping us to prepare for this trial. Thanks also to Kane County Assistant State's Attorneys Alex Bederka and Jon McKay, who prosecuted the case."

Rodriguez had been held in the Kane County jail in lieu of \$750,000 bail. Bond was revoked upon conviction.