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ELGIN MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO SEPARATE SPRING 2011 SHOOTINGS

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An Elgin man has pleaded guilty to two shootings that took place a month apart in spring 2011 in Elgin.

Karl F. Bonilla, 20 (d.o.b. 1-28-1992), of the 400 block of Lowrie Street, Elgin, today agreed to a sentence of 25 years in the Illinois Department of Corrections in exchange for a guilty plea to four counts of aggravated battery with a firearm, each a Class X felony.

Associate Judge Clint Hull accepted the plea.

At about 5 a.m. April 23, 2011, in the parking lot of an establishment in the 300 block of South McLean Boulevard, Elgin, Bonilla fired a .25-caliber handgun at a group that had just exited the establishment. One person was struck in the upper right arm. Bonilla immediately fled.

At about 12:30 a.m. May 23, 2011, Bonilla fired multiple shots from a .22-caliber handgun at a group on the porch of a residence in the 0-99 block of Woodland Avenue, Elgin. Three people were struck, including the victim from the April 23 shooting. One victim was struck in the left shoulder, one victim was struck in the ankle and one victim was struck in the buttocks. Bonilla immediately fled.

On May 26, 2011, Elgin police arrested Bonilla on a warrant in an unrelated case. Bonilla at the time of his arrest was in possession of a .22-caliber handgun and a .25-caliber handgun. Subsequent ballistics tests revealed that the .22-caliber handgun matched shell casings recovered at the scene of the May 23 shooting. Further, the victim from the April 23 shooting identified Bonilla as the person who shot her. Also, a witness told police that she saw Bonilla at the scene of the April 23 shooting at the time of the incident.

Authorities believe that Bonilla, a known street gang member, mistakenly believed he was shooting at members of a rival street gang. Authorities also believe it to be coincidental that the same person was a victim in each shooting.

The sentence is seven years for the count involving the April 23 incident, and six years each for the three counts involving the May 23 incident. The sentences are to be served consecutively because Judge Hull ruled that the victims suffered severe bodily injury as a result of the shootings.

All of the victims continue to recover from their injuries, which were severe but not considered life-threatening.

Based on Illinois law, Bonilla must serve at least 85 percent of the sentence. Bonilla was given credit for at least 519 days served in the Kane County jail.

The case was investigated by Elgin Police detectives Tom Wolek and John Fennell, and prosecuted by Kane County Assistant State's Attorney William Engerman.