



Office of the Kane County State's Attorney
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 30, 2026

**Aurora Man Sentenced to 33 Years in Prison
for 2023 Murder of Edwin Varela**

*RE: **Zahmeir Andrews**: Age 19 (d.o.b. 12-27-2006), of the 1300 block of Monomoy St., Aurora, Illinois. Case No. 2023CF1807.*

ST. CHARLES, IL – Kane County State's Attorney Jamie L. Mosser announces that Judge David Kliment has sentenced **Zahmeir Andrews** to 33 years of imprisonment in the Illinois Department of Corrections.

On July 14, 2026, Judge David Kliment convicted Zahmeir Andrews of the following offenses:

- First-Degree Murder, Class M felony
- Attempt First-Degree Murder, Class X felony
- Attempt Armed Robbery, Class 1 felony
- Unlawful Possession of a Weapon, Class 3 felony

Assistant State's Attorneys Mark Stajdohar and Adam Katz presented the following facts in court:

At approximately 7:24 p.m. on Aug. 20, 2023, Aurora police received multiple 911 calls reporting a vehicle crash and a person shot on the 1300 block of N. Glen Circle. Responding officers located 19-year-old Edwin Varela of Aurora suffering from gunshot wounds inside a crashed vehicle. Aurora Fire Department paramedics transported Varela to a local hospital, where he was pronounced dead a short time later.

Evidence presented at trial showed that Varela and his girlfriend, who was seated in the front passenger seat, had been planning to go to dinner that evening when Varela told her he needed to make a stop to sell illegal cannabis and vape cartridges. The two drove to the area of N. Glen Circle, where Varela stopped the vehicle near three individuals and began discussing payment with one of them. A fourth individual, later identified as 16-year-old Zahmeir Andrews, approached the vehicle carrying a handgun. Varela backed out of a driveway and then put his car into drive to go forward, at which point Andrews began firing into the vehicle.

Varela was struck multiple times in the upper body. The vehicle continued moving after he was shot and crashed into several parked cars. Varela's girlfriend was not struck.

As a minor, Andrews was prohibited by law from possessing the firearm.

The three other individuals were identified and charged in connection with the shooting. Two were juveniles. The third was 18-year-old Daniel D. Robinson; his case remains pending, and he is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Andrews was sentenced to consecutive terms of 25 years for First-Degree Murder and 8 years for Attempt First-Degree Murder, for an aggregate sentence of 33 years. Under Illinois law, he must serve the full 25-year murder sentence and 85% of the 8-year sentence for Attempt First-Degree Murder. Concurrent to those sentences, Andrews was sentenced to 4 years for Attempt Armed Robbery and 2 years for Unlawful Possession of a Weapon, both of which are eligible for day-to-day sentencing. He receives credit for 1,133 days served in the Kane County Jail.

ASA Stajdohar said: “Although all murders are senseless, this one was especially so because it was over a small amount of cannabis, and the defendant got away with nothing. He fired his weapon and fled. This young victim had a long life ahead of him that was cut short far too soon. The defendant will now have a quarter of a century to reflect on the life he ended and took away from a loving family. Thank you to the Aurora Police Department, especially Sgt. Christopher Cox, for their thorough investigation into this case. I also thank ASA Adam Katz for his work on the case and Victim Advocates Martha Martinez and Darlene Rodriguez for their support of the victim’s family.”

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