

CLALLAM COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Port Angeles Man Sentenced to 11.5 years for Second-Degree Attempted Murder *Clallam County Superior Court Cause No.: 25-1-00071-05*

On Tuesday, January 20, the Honorable Judge Brent Basden sentenced Brian Lester, 39, of Port Angeles to 138 months in prison. Lester's sentence followed a four-day trial in early December where the jury found him guilty of one count of Attempted Murder in the Second Degree and one count of Felony Harassment. The jury also determined that Lester was armed with a deadly weapon during the commission of the crimes. Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Matthew Roberson represented the State of Washington and Charlie Commeree represented Lester.

According to testimony, Michael Lynch and Dorothy Hunt-Wood, Lester's partner, were sleeping in a Kia sedan at Francis Street Park in Port Angeles when Lester reached through the driver's side window and began attacking Lynch. Lynch was able to get out of the vehicle and fight back. During the scuffle, Lester told Lynch he was a dead man according to Hunt-Wood's testimony. At some point, Lynch testified Lester went back to his nearby Dodge Durango and retrieved his pistol, pointing it at Lynch.

Lester then fired at Lynch, who had fled back into the Kia, striking the B pillar of the car. Lynch testified he then tried to drive the Kia to get away or prevent Lester from firing again when he hit a pole. According to court testimony, hearing emergency sirens, Lester retreated to his car with Hunt-Wood where they waited for police to arrive. Officers with the Port Angeles Police Department arrived within moments. Upon arrival officers secured the scene and found a 9mm pistol stuffed under the passenger seat. Ballistics testing later matched the fired bullet with the discovered pistol.

During trial, the prosecution provided the jury with two Facebook Messenger conversations between Lester and Hunt-Wood and Lester and an unrelated third party sent less than an hour before the shooting. In the messages, Lester stated multiple times he was hunting Lynch due to Lester's belief that Hunt-Wood was having an affair. Lester later said in one message that he would be going to prison. The prosecution also provided physical exhibits, scene photographs, and the testimony of investigators and a ballistics expert to support its theory of the case.

At sentencing, Lester faced 92.25 to 165 months on the attempted second-degree murder charge and a concurrent sentence of 1 to 3 months on the Felony Harassment charge under Washington's Sentencing Reform Act. There was also an additional 30 months of prison time to be imposed since he was armed with a deadly weapon. Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Roberson recommended a total sentence of 150 months, citing Lester's hunt for Lynch. Roberson also recommended 36 months of community custody as required under Washington law. Charlie Commeree, defense counsel, argued for a minimum total sentence of 122.25 months.

After listening to the recommendations, Judge Basden imposed a sentence of 108 months of imprisonment on second-degree attempted murder with a concurrent sentence of 3 months on felony harassment. He also imposed an additional 30 months for the weapons enhancements. Judge Basden ordered Lester to serve 36 months of community custody and required him to engage in domestic violence counselling. As he explained his sentence, Judge Basden acknowledged the seriousness of the crimes and that Lester had numerous opportunities to abandon his confrontation with Lester before pulling the trigger.

Sentencing Information

In Washington, felonies are sentenced pursuant to Chapter 9.94A RCW, known as the Sentencing Reform Act. Under the Act, judges must impose a sentence within the standard range for that offense. Ranges are determined by an offender's offender score, typically prior felony convictions, and the seriousness level of an offense. Seriousness levels and sentencing ranges are set by the Legislature. Sentences for multiple felony convictions must be served concurrently except in rare circumstances.

Office Information

The Clallam County Prosecuting Attorney's Office employs over 25 people, including 14 attorneys. Clallam County, which includes Forks, Port Angeles and Sequim, has an approximate population of 78,000.

The Criminal Division represents the state and the county in criminal matters in the Clallam County District and Superior Courts. The Criminal Division is responsible for prosecuting all felonies in Clallam County and all misdemeanors in unincorporated areas of Clallam County as well as the Cities of Port Angeles and Sequim.

The Civil Division acts as the law firm representing the County and its agencies. The Civil Division advises and represents all of the County's elected officials and departments on a myriad of complex legal matters. The range of legal representation provided by this unit is expansive and covers virtually every aspect of civil practice.

The Child Support Division is wholly funded by and represents the Division of Child Support of the State of Washington. The Support Division carries out judicial establishment of paternity and child support, enforcements for failure to pay court-ordered child support, and modifications to existing child support orders. The Support Division also represents the State of Washington in collection actions on parents owing a duty of support.

For more information call:

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