December 11, 2024

JURY FINDS ZECAJA GUILTY OF ARMED BURGLARY AND ATTEMPTED MURDERS

State Attorney Melissa Nelson announces that a Duval County jury found Lionel Zecaja guilty of Armed Burglary; five counts of Attempted Second-Degree Murder; Aggravated Battery; and Shooting or Throwing Deadly Missiles. With the verdict, Zecaja faces up to life in Florida State Prison. The Honorable London Kite will sentence Zecaja at a later date.

Around 11 p.m. Sept. 12, 2020, patrol officers were dispatched to a San Jose Forest apartment complex for a shooting. One victim was shot inside an apartment and was taken to the hospital. Officers on scene learned the shooter was in a nearby apartment. They arrested Zecaja in his apartment and shortly after found the gun in a bag inside a closet with an empty magazine in the firearm. Prior to the shooting, a drunk man hit Zecaja in the head with a bottle of liquor which caused Zecaja to start bleeding. Zecaja grabbed his gun from his car and chased the drunk man while shooting. The first victim told police he was outside his apartment with four people when they heard gunfire. Everyone ran inside their apartment and Zecaja followed them inside and continued shooting. Zecaja hit the first victim with a bullet and then continued to pull the trigger until he was out of ammunition. At that moment, Zecaja pointed his gun at a 15-year-old boy, 10-year-old boy, and 7-year-old girl. The oldest of the three children charged at Zecaja to fight for the gun and Zecaja struck the teen in the head with the gun. The teen struggled with Zecaja and put him in a headlock and forced him out of the apartment.

The case was investigated by the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Assistant State Attorneys Jalisa Curtis and Corie Posey.