



Elliot Kolkovich

Summit County Prosecutor

For Immediate Release

Friday, February 21, 2025

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PROSECUTOR KOLKOVICH ANNOUNCES COMBINED 20 TO 22 YEARS IN PRISON FOR TWO OFFENDERS IN AKRON APARTMENT SHOOTING

AKRON, OH – Today, Summit County Prosecutor Elliot Kolkovich announced that two offenders involved in shooting multiple rounds into an apartment complex have been sentenced to a combined 20 to 22 years in prison. Solomon A. Varner, 19, and Martaze L. Portis, 21, were each sentenced to 10 to 12 years in prison.

A third defendant, Jay Viare C. T. Harden, 20, is scheduled to be sentenced on April 2, 2025 at 2 p.m. by Summit County Court of Common Pleas Judge Mary Margaret Rowlands.

“These offenders recklessly shot into an occupied apartment building, endangering numerous people inside their homes and around the building,” said Prosecutor Kolkovich. **“While I am thankful that no one was injured or killed, that does not diminish the traumatic impact of gun violence on our communities. I am proud of the responding Akron police officers and my assistant prosecutors for ensuring Varner and Portis were held responsible.”**

Varner and Portis both pleaded guilty to the following charges last December:

- Two counts of Improperly Discharging a Firearm at or into a Habitation, each with a three-year Firearm Specification – 2nd Degree Felonies; and
- One count of Improperly Handling Firearms in a Motor Vehicle, with a Specification for Forfeiture of a Weapon – a 4th Degree Felony.

In January, Harden pleaded guilty to the following charges:

- Two counts of Improperly Discharging a Firearm at or into a Habitation, with one three-year Firearm Specification – 2nd Degree Felonies;
- One count of Having Weapons While Under Disability – a 3rd Degree Felony; and
- One count of Unlawful Possession of Dangerous Ordnance – a 5th Degree Felony.

In September 2023, Varner, Portis, and Harden walked up to an occupied apartment complex on Pine Knolls Drive in Akron and started firing, before running to a black SUV parked on the next street – and pointing a gun at a witness outside on the way. Victims inside the apartment reported hearing gun shots and seeing bullets coming through the walls. A license plate reader camera allowed law enforcement to locate the vehicle

and lead them to another apartment that the offenders were in. When police knocked on the door, the offenders attempted to run away from police via the balconies. Police found multiple firearms in the apartment, and one on Harden. Ballistics testing, witness testimony, and security camera footage helped link the offenders to the crime.

A fourth defendant, Quynshod M. R. J. Taylor, has also been indicted for his role in the shooting. He is scheduled to begin trial on March 17, 2025. The indictment against Taylor contains only allegations. He is entitled to the presumption of innocence and a fair trial where the State will have to prove his guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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