



NEWS RELEASE

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Shooter Sentenced to 51 Years for Attempted First-Degree Murder of Police Officers

Darren Ross Hoffman was sentenced to 51 years in prison Thursday for attempted first-degree murder of two Thornton police officers during a burglary in 2017.

On November 13, 2017, Thornton officers responded to a burglary in progress at 1841 Rowena Street. Officers ordered Hoffman (DOB 05/19/95) to place his hands above his head and he initially complied, but then turned and ran with officers in pursuit. Hoffman fired six shots at officers from behind a car before placing the gun on the hood of the car. One of the bullets went through the wall of a bedroom where a woman was sleeping. The officers were not wounded.

An Adams County jury convicted Hoffman in December on four counts of attempted-first degree murder after deliberation and with extreme indifference of Thornton police officers Mickey Schaezle and Abraham Balderrama, as well as three counts of attempted manslaughter.

"He shot repeatedly with no regard for anyone," Chief Deputy District Attorney Patrick Costigan told the court during the sentencing hearing. "I'm not sure he has any regard today. He attempted to kill two police officers and put everyone in that neighborhood at risk. Cynthia Heron was laying in her bed when all of a sudden a bullet came through the bedroom wall."

Costigan said that the officers showed incredible restraint in not shooting and killing Hoffman as he shot at them repeatedly. "The discipline of these police officers is extraordinary," Costigan said. "They showed heroism, bravery and restraint. They have been recognized by the Thornton Police Department for the heroism and restraint they showed while their lives were in peril."

Officer Schaezle's wife told the court that her husband could have been killed that night while working to serve and protect the community. "It is only because my husband zigged instead of zagged that night that he wasn't shot by one of those six bullets that (Hoffman) fired at my husband and his partner. That is a risk that he takes every single day. We know every day when he goes out the door, he may not come home, but every day, he goes out."

Adams County Judge Tomee Crespino told Hoffman his actions almost took the lives of two police officers and put the neighborhood community in "extreme danger" as he shot repeatedly

with no regard for where his bullets would go. "Because of the choices you made that night, you could have killed two officers and people in the neighborhood," she said. She sentenced Hoffman to two 24 years prison terms to be served consecutively for attempted murder of the two officers, plus three years for attempted manslaughter, for a total of 51 years in prison.

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