

Man sentenced to 22 years in prison for 2014 shooting near school

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EDWARDSVILLE — **Madison County State's Attorney Tom Gibbons** announced that an Alton man was sentenced to 22 years in prison today for a 2014 shooting near Lovejoy Elementary School in Alton.

Charles D. Thomas (d.o.b. 7/26/1988) was convicted by a Madison County jury on June 15, 2016, following a three-day trial at the Criminal Justice Center in Edwardsville, Illinois. After less than one hour of deliberation, the jury returned a guilty verdict on a charge of Aggravated Discharge of a Firearm Within 1,000 Feet of a School, a Class X Felony.

On February 19, 2014, the Alton Police Department responded to a report of shots fired in the 1000 block of Tremont. The reported shots were fired within 1000 feet of Lovejoy Elementary at a time students were present, causing the school to go into lockdown. Upon arrival, officers located the victim who reported that he had been walking down Tremont when shots were fired. After locating the suspect, officers discovered a

backpack containing a firearm inside his vehicle. The investigation determined that Thomas approached the victim in his vehicle and fired shots out of the passenger window in the direction of Lovejoy Elementary school.

“This dangerous man, who fired off multiple shots within hundreds of feet of the doors of an elementary school, does not belong on the streets of Madison County; he belongs behind bars, where he will remain for a long time,” said Gibbons. “Placing a school on lockdown is a traumatic experience for all involved, I am thankful that no one at Lovejoy Elementary was injured as a result of this unprovoked act of violence.”

State's Attorney Gibbons thanked Assistant State's Attorneys Crystal Uhe, Chief of the Criminal Division, and Rachelle Crowe, of the Violent Crimes Unit for their work in securing a conviction. Gibbons also commended the work of the officers from the Alton Police Department who were able to quickly identify and arrest Thomas following the shooting. “My prosecutors, along with local law enforcement agencies, will continue to fight to remove these dangerous individuals from our community.”

Maximum penalty for a Class X Felony is 6-30 years in prison. The defendant will be required to serve 85 percent of the sentence that was handed down by Associate Judge Neil Schroeder.