



Pair Sentenced For Violent Carjackings, One Was Former East St. Louis and Jones College Star Athlete

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EAST ST. LOUIS - This is one of those stories that people often don't want to hear about — a story about a highly regarded athlete and how his fate was turned upside down with a summer crime spree.

Such is the case of Jamariante N. Burgess, now 21, of East St. Louis. Burgess and his co-defendant, Armon R. Simpson, 19, of St. Louis, have admitted to participating in a string of violent carjackings in the Metro East. Burgess received a 192-month sentence, meaning he will serve 16 years in prison. Simpson will serve 208 months in his sentence.

Both men pled guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit carjacking, one count of carjacking and one count of use of a dangerous weapon to commit a crime of violence.

At the time of the crimes, Simpson was 17. He was certified by the Court to be treated as an adult in the case. Burgess was 19 years old at the time of the crime spree in the summer of 2021.



Burgess was a member of East St. Louis' football team that went 14-0 and won a state championship in 2019. Burgess was a defensive back for the Flyers. He also was an outstanding track and field star for the Flyers, recording a personal best of 14.24 in the 110-meter high hurdles and 37.82 in the 300-meter low hurdles. In indoor track, Burgess ran a 6.72 60-meter dash.



Burgess played five games during his freshman year for Jones College. He had six solo tackles and seven assists in his career as a member of the Ellisville, Miss., Bobcats. In

his last game on Nov. 19, 2000, he had two tackles and two assists in his defensive back role. It will mark the last time he will ever step on a football field as a player because of his lengthy prison sentence.

“In a one-month span, the co-defendants wreaked serious havoc on numerous victims in the Metro East area,” said U.S. Attorney Rachelle Aud Crowe. “The pair have proven they have no respect for the law, and their federal prison sentences reflect the severity of the violence and terror they caused.”

“The co-defendants showed a total disregard for other people — their safety and welfare — as they terrorized their community on numerous occasions,” said Illinois State Police Director Brendan F. Kelly. “ISP refuses to let people get away with this behavior and will continue to work with local law enforcement and the United States Attorney’s Office Southern District of Illinois to bring violent criminals to justice.”

According to court documents and official proceedings, the co-defendants engaged in a string of violent carjackings around the East St. Louis and St. Louis area during the summer of 2021. Beginning in July, the co-defendants pointed firearms at and carjacked a victim at the Roosevelt Homes public housing complex in East St. Louis. On Aug. 5, 2021, Burgess and Simpson displayed firearms and carjacked a man in the St. Louis Soulard neighborhood. After being unable to drive the car, Burgess and Simpson exchanged gunfire with a citizen who tried to stop the carjacking. Undeterred, the pair then went to downtown St. Louis, robbed three victims of their belongings at gunpoint and forcibly took their vehicle.

Burgess and Simpson fled with the stolen vehicle to the John DeShields Apartments in East St. Louis. Simpson erroneously identified an innocent pedestrian as a member of an opposing gang and both Simpson and Burgess shot at the victim, who sustained injuries. Police in both Illinois and Missouri worked quickly to identify the suspects and arrested Burgess and Simpson later that morning.

Officers recovered three firearms and some of the robbery victims’ belongings. Law enforcement officers with the Illinois State Police Public Safety Enforcement Group (PSEG), the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, and the St. Louis County Police Department conducted the investigations. Assistant U.S. Attorney Alexandria Burns prosecuted the case.