

Man gets 14 years for aggravated robbery

Hurricane Katrina evacuee sentenced

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A Hurricane Katrina evacuee residing in Houston was sentenced to 14 years in prison after a jury found him guilty of aggravated robbery.

Justin Jerome Alexander, 24, was convicted for robbing at gunpoint the day manager of the Stafford Taco Bell.

The robbery occurred June 30, 2008, at the restaurant, located at the intersection of U.S. 59 and Dairy Ashford, when Gene Bogan was leaving to make the store's bank deposit.

Assistant District Attorney John Hawkins said as Bogan exited the building, a car quickly approached with two masked men inside. Alexander, the passenger, jumped out of the vehicle and threw Bogan to the ground, demanding the keys to the store's safe while thrusting a sawed-off shotgun at Bogan's throat.

Hawkins said Alexander struck Bogan's arm with the butt of the shotgun with such force that the victim required surgery.

"The defendant's actions were vio-

lent and calculating, and it's fortunate no one was killed," Hawkins said. "Alexander was probation-eligible, but the jury recognized these actions deserved a more severe sentence."

Alexander was tried in Judge Brady Elliott's 268th District Court, where the jury was told Sylvia Sanders, a cashier who witnessed the robbery, saw the suspects' car as it left the parking lot. More than a month later, Sanders saw the same vehicle in Southwest Houston and called 911 to report the license plate number.

Police discovered the car was registered to Alexander, who was subsequently arrested, but the money taken during the robbery was never recovered.

Aggravated robbery is a first-degree felony that carries a prison term of 5-99 years or life and a fine up to \$10,000. Alexander must serve at least one-half of his sentence before becoming eligible for parole because he used a deadly weapon to commit the crime.

He was represented by Steven John Gilbert and Derick Smith, while Hawkins was assisted by Assistant District Attorney Michael Hartman.