

Beth McCann
District Attorney

Second Judicial District



201 W. Colfax Ave. Dept. 801
Denver, CO 80202

720-913-9000

Beth.McCann@denverda.org

NEWS RELEASE –

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Contact:

Carolyn Tyler, Director of Communications

Carolyn.Tyler@denverda.org, 720-913-9025

Denver District Attorney Prosecutors Secure Hate Crime Conviction (Lee)

DENVER—Denver District Attorney Beth McCann today announced that Ryan Austin Lee (age 43), who has a history of racial intimidation, was found guilty of two counts of bias motivated crime (F5) and two counts of assault in the third degree (M1). Unlike other crimes, securing a hate crime conviction requires that prosecutors prove what was going through a person’s mind at the time of the incident.

“Hate crimes are criminal expressions of bigotry that terrorize the entire community,” said Denver District Attorney Beth McCann. “Mr. Lee shouted racial epithets while attacking the victims which provided the jury with the motive needed to find Lee guilty of a hate crime. We are pleased that the jury agreed with us that these crimes were racially motivated.”

Lee was on a deferred judgment for another case in which on March 10, 2017, he wielded a hammer while threatening and chasing a mixed-race family (husband, wife, and seven-year old son) around Garfield Park in Southwest Denver yelling racial epithets. While on the deferred judgment for that case 17CR01698, on March 2, 2018, Lee assaulted two additional victims. Lee first reached through the window of a car and punched the driver with a closed fist. The passenger exited the car and was walking away when Lee grabbed him by the back of his collar, threw him to the ground, and repeatedly kicked him, all the time yelling racial slurs.

Because Lee was convicted in this case, 18CR01943, the deferred judgement in the prior case will be revoked and result in a conviction of menacing (F5). Denver District Court Senior Judge William Robbins presided over the hearing and has set sentencing for May 3, 2019, at 10:30 a.m. in Courtroom 5A. Lee faces a maximum sentence of 15-years; three years for the first case and six years for each victim in the second case.