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**\*\*\*MEDIA ALERT\*\*\***

**For Immediate Release**  
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**POINT-BLANK SHOT IN DRUG DEAL GONE WRONG  
RESULTS IN ROBBERY CONVICTION AND  
POTENTIALLY DECADES IN PRISON**

Evansville, IN – Prosecutor Diana Moers announces that on July 2, 2025, Defendant Jonathan Wyatt Bell was found guilty of Robbery Resulting in Serious Bodily Injury, a Level 2 felony, and a firearm enhancement was found to apply. The Honorable Magistrate Judge Celia M. Pauli of the Vanderburgh County Circuit Court presided.

On September 10, 2024, police officers were dispatched to 1706 S. Red Bank Road regarding a shots fired call and found Blayze Handegard lying on the ground, bleeding heavily from his buttocks with what appeared to be a gunshot wound. Handegard identified the shooter as an individual with long red hair, tattoos, and a white shirt—matching the description of the Defendant, Jonathan Bell. It was later confirmed that the shooting was related to a drug deal involving marijuana. When the victim got into a vehicle with the Defendant, he was immediately held at gunpoint. When he tried to flee, the Defendant shot him point-blank.

At the trial, the prosecution presented evidence that the Defendant lied at the scene that he knew nothing about the robbery, but later admitted that he knew the robbery was going to occur and that he was actually the driver of the vehicle and picked up two other persons in expectation of robbing Handegard. This was further corroborated by text messages prior to the robbery where the Defendant was talking about performing “licks,” a slang term for robbery.

The injuries suffered by the victim were severe. The bullet severed his urethra and required surgical reconstruction. In total, the victim needed at least nine surgeries and will suffer complications, including the inability to father children, for the rest of his life.

Prosecutor Moers stated: “We were glad to seek justice for Blayze Handegard who was very seriously injured from a gunshot wound at the hands of the Defendant. Any time a gun is fired the impacts are lasting—if not deadly. The law recognizes the seriousness of the use of a firearm in the commission of a crime through a firearm enhancement that mandates an additional term of years, which was sought by my office and found to apply here. My office will ask for a sentence which reflects the fact that Blayze Handegard will never be the same because of the actions of the Defendant.

Moers thanked her deputies, K. Maurer and N. Thomas, for presenting a compelling case to the jury and the tireless efforts to investigate the crime and keep the community safe of the following law enforcement personnel: Det. A. Juncker, Lt. Karges, Deputy Fentress, Det. K. Dennis, and Sgt. L. Martin. She also thanked her staff for supporting the trial team in securing the conviction: T. Lubbehusen, J. Pollock, T. Carden, M. Richardville, J. Carter, L. Deutsch, and F. Elpers.”

Sentencing is scheduled for July 28, 2025, in front of the Honorable Magistrate Judge Celia M. Pauli of the Vanderburgh County Circuit Court. A Level 2 felony carries a possible sentence of 10–30 years in prison, and the firearm enhancement adds 5–20 years, for a total possible sentence of 15–50 years.

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