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City Attorney Wins Conviction in Hate Crime Trial

Victim in wheelchair was insulted, degraded at a 7-Eleven

A San Diego man has been convicted of committing a hate crime against a disabled person whom he had never met before they crossed paths at an East Village convenience store.

William Joseph Padilla, 42, was convicted last week of a misdemeanor count of willful cruelty to a dependent adult with a hate crime allegation. Padilla was sentenced April 6 to 96 days of time served in custody, one year of summary probation, and an eight-hour anger management course. In addition, a criminal protective order requires Padilla to have no contact with the victim for three years.

Under the sentence, Padilla will be required to show proof that he completed an anger management course within 60 days.

The charges arose from an October 2022 incident at a 7-Eleven on Park Boulevard, where the victim, who uses a wheelchair, had gone intending to purchase a drink before his work shift at Petco Park. While at the convenience store, a bystander offered to help the victim with his purchase. The bystander asked Padilla, who had completed his purchase, to step aside so that the victim could make his purchase.

This led to a physical altercation between Padilla and the bystander that continued outside the store. Padilla returned to the 7-Eleven to insult the victim by using disability-related slurs and shouting, "You stupid idiot, no one cares, I could kill you." The victim said Padilla also spat at him several times.

"The jury got it right. No one should be targeted in this way," City Attorney Mara W. Elliott said. **"Verbally assaulting a person because of their disability is the very definition of a hate crime. There is no excuse for the egregious actions of the defendant in this case."**

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During the trial, Padilla testified that he believed he was the victim in the situation based on his fight with the bystander. Neither man was charged in connection with their altercation outside of the store, as it was deemed to be mutual combat.

This case was prosecuted by Deputy City Attorney Jacqueline Jimenez of Domestic Violence Unit of the City Attorney's Criminal and Community Justice Division. The unit is overseen by Chief Deputy City Attorney Angela Law.

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