

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



SHANNON WALLACE
District Attorney

Cherokee County Justice Center
90 North Street, Suite 390
Canton, GA 30114

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Cyndi Crossland
Public Information Officer
cbcrossland@cherokeega.com
770-479-1488

Robert Aaron Long Pleads Guilty to Mass Shooting, Sentenced to Life Without Parole
State vs. Robert Aaron Long

July 27, 2021 – District Attorney Shannon Wallace announces that Robert Aaron Long, 22, pled guilty this morning to murder and other charges related to the mass shooting that occurred at Youngs Asian Massage in Cherokee County on March 16, 2021. After admitting to the charges, Long was sentenced to serve four consecutive life sentences without parole plus an additional 35 years in confinement, ensuring that he will spend the remainder of his natural life in prison.

On March 16, Long entered Youngs Asian Massage and used a SAR 9mm handgun to murder Xiaojie Tan, Daoyou Feng, Delaina Yaun-Gonzalez, and Paul Michels. He also severely injured Elcias Hernandez-Ortiz and placed six others inside the business in fear of being shot during the rampage.

The arrest and capture of this defendant was a collaborative effort involving multiple law enforcement agencies, including the Cherokee Sheriff's Office, the Cherokee Marshal's Office, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Georgia State Patrol, and the Crisp County Sheriff's Office.

Deputies with the Cherokee Sheriff's Office responded to the crime scene within minutes of receiving the first 911 call, secured the scene along with members of the Cherokee Marshal's Office, located surveillance footage of the suspect, and placed still images on social media asking the public for assistance.

Several individuals recognized the suspect, including the defendant's parents, who were instrumental in helping law enforcement locate their son. Once the suspect's location was determined, Cherokee Sheriff Frank Reynolds contacted Crisp County Sheriff Billy Hancock, who worked with the Georgia State Patrol to capture the defendant without incident.

“On one of Cherokee County's darkest nights, the light still shown through our dedicated law enforcement professionals who worked tirelessly to apprehend this killer,” said Chief Assistant District Attorney Susan Treadaway, who prosecuted the case along with District Attorney Shannon Wallace. “This defendant was on a mission to continue his violent acts. We are so thankful for our public safety officials for preventing him from taking more lives.”

After the defendant was apprehended in Crisp County, the defendant admitted to Cherokee Sheriff's Office detectives that he was responsible for the killings at Youngs on March 16, and described in detail his movements before, during, and after the murders. During today's proceedings, Long again recounted the events of that day.

The Court also heard impact statements from a victim and a family member of a victim who described the feelings of loss and pain they have endured.

Cherokee County Chief Superior Court Judge Ellen McElyea then spoke directly to the victims and their families, saying that none of them deserves the fate that was visited upon them by the defendant. She added that after the sentence is signed and the cameras are turned off, the families will still be struggling and grieving. “Once hatred is given a gun, it doesn’t matter who gets in the way,” she added.

At the conclusion of the hearing, Judge McElyea accepted the negotiated sentence, and the defendant was immediately remanded to the Georgia Department of Corrections.

“We said from the beginning that we would work to bring justice for these victims, and we have,” said District Attorney Shannon Wallace. “Today, through effective collaboration of law enforcement, prosecution, and the judicial system, we have brought some closure for these families while ensuring a swift and firm sentence that confines this defendant to a life behind bars. It is our hope that the legal outcome obtained today will bring some measure of peace and healing to all those affected by this tragedy.”

The Office of the District Attorney for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit is committed to seeking justice, acting with integrity, and collaborating with partner agencies in the criminal justice system in order to protect the citizens of Cherokee County and the State of Georgia.

###