



STEPHEN B. TYLER

CRIMINAL DISTRICT ATTORNEY
205 N. BRIDGE STREET SUITE #301
VICTORIA, TEXAS 77901
Phone: (361) 575-0468
Fax: (361) 576-4139



Victoria Man found Guilty of Tampering with Evidence

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: CONTACT: Steve Tyler (361) 575-0468



On Wednesday, April 11th, 2018, a Victoria County jury found Gerald Lamont Peoples, 44, guilty of the felony offense of Tampering with Physical Evidence. The jury acquitted the defendant of Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon. However, they also found that the defendant concealed the knife with which the State alleged the defendant had committed the assault in order to prevent the police from recovering it as evidence in the case.

At the trial, the jury heard from the defendant's wife. She testified that, shortly after she came home from work on March 24, 2017, she had been sleeping on the couch in the living room of the home she shared with the defendant when he started an argument with her over money. She stated that the defendant was angry because he had found out that she made more money that pay period than she had told him she did. The argument

escalated the defendant pulled out a pocket knife. When she tried to stand up, he pushed her back into the couch on which she had been sleeping, overturning the couch in the process. After she got up, the defendant approached her, cornered her in the kitchen, and held the knife close to her neck. She testified that the defendant held the knife to her neck for about ten seconds before he backed off, at which point she picked up her grandson and darted out of the house where she called 911. She remained outside the home till the police arrived.

The police interviewed both the defendant and his wife. When asked whether he owned a pocket knife, the defendant told the police that he had given the pocket knife to his friend who was at the home to take away from the location. His wife contradicted this account, telling the police that while the defendant's friend was there earlier, he had left the location before the defendant threatened her with the knife. The police searched the location but were unable to find the pocket knife. They arrested the defendant for aggravated assault and tampering with evidence, and instructed his wife to call the police if she were to come across the pocket knife. Later that same day, the defendant's wife called the police to report that she had located two pocket knives. The defendant had hidden them in the window sill behind the headboard in their bedroom. Further corroborating her account were three phone calls that the defendant made from the Victoria County jail shortly after his arrest. In these calls, the defendant repeatedly instructs a friend to go to his bedroom window, the same window where the pocket knives were recovered, to remove "the things." The friend reported back that there was nothing in the window, since the knives were already taken by the police. After deliberating for two hours and fifty minutes, the jury found the defendant guilty of tampering with physical evidence.

The jury also assessed punishment in this case. Due to the fact that the defendant had been convicted of at least two prior felonies, Robbery and Aggravated Robbery, the range of punishment was a minimum of 25 years and a maximum of life in prison. The jury heard testimony from the defendant's wife and a number of other witnesses, including the defendant. His wife testified in the last couple of years, their marriage had turned tumultuous and violent, and marred by drug use, causing her to seek and obtain a divorce. During the defendant's testimony, testified that in his younger day, he had been a gang member but was no longer active. He further testified that in the year he had spent incarcerated at the Victoria County jail, he had found religion and was now a reformed man. On cross-examination, the prosecution was able to undermine this argument, showing via a letter that the defendant wrote to the parole board that the defendant had, in the past, claimed to have become a changed man, and then subsequently committed more criminal offenses that contradicted his claim. The defendant was also forced to admit that, in a very rare occurrence, he served about nineteen years of his twenty year sentence and that the reason for this was his less than stellar behavior while incarcerated.

After hearing all the evidence in the punishment phase, the jury deliberated for an additional forty five minutes before sentencing the defendant to fifty years in prison.

Assistant District Attorneys Barbara Agbu and Jacqueline Johnson prosecuted this case.