

ALERT TOP STORY

Jury convicts Spotsylvania man in 2020 slaying of two brothers

Keith Epps

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A Spotsylvania man who killed two brothers during a road-rage incident in 2020 was convicted of two counts of first-degree murder Thursday.

Danny Lee Huffman, 50, was also convicted of two counts of using a firearm in the commission of a felony. A jury deliberated about six hours on the fourth day of the trial before announcing its decision in Spotsylvania Circuit Court.

Huffman killed Spotsylvania men Fred Swick, 39, and Joe Swick, 38, on July 4, 2020, near a group of mailboxes on Fox Trot Court. The Swicks were still inside their still-running Camaro when deputies discovered them; they had been shot a total of 12 times.

Huffman was on the witness stand for much of the day Wednesday, but the jury clearly didn't believe his explanation regarding the shootings. Huffman claimed he was scared and acting in self-defense after someone inside the vehicle threatened him and his teenage son.

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Huffman told the jurors that the altercation began in the area of Lawyers and Granite Springs roads when he noticed a car half on and half off the road. Huffman said that when he asked the occupants if they needed any help, they responded with a series of middle fingers.

The driver got out of the car and began approaching his vehicle, according to Huffman's story. Huffman said the three people in the car left after he responded with a warning shot.

A short time later, Huffman said he was at his mailbox when the car stopped about 50 feet away. Huffman said he fired into the vehicle after the occupants threatened him and his son and pointed a gun at him.

Huffman's initial story was that a mystery third man had gotten out of the vehicle by then and stabbed him in the arm. He said that the man ran off during the commotion.

On Wednesday, Huffman admitted that he didn't see the third man at the shooting scene and that he wasn't stabbed, but assumed he was there because he'd seen him minutes earlier.

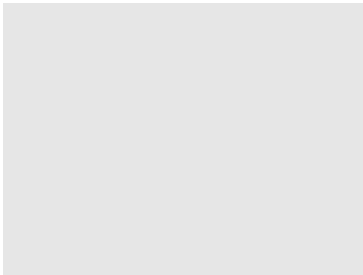
Prosecutor Kelly Green and Commonwealth's Attorney Travis Bird said none of the versions of Huffman's story matched the evidence. They argued that he was upset about a fight he'd had with his girlfriend earlier that day and took it out on the Swicks.

Bird said that even if the Swicks were cursing and making gestures at Huffman, that didn't justify his response. Huffman said he didn't recall many of the statements he made in taped interviews with police shortly after the incident.

Huffman's stories also didn't match the one his son, Austin Huffman, told the jury earlier in the week. The younger Huffman said the Swicks aggravated his father by "brake-checking" him, and he said there never was a third man.

Defense attorneys Gretchen Taylor and Michael Kessler put on multiple family members who said that Austin Huffman was known among family members as a notorious liar.

Huffman will be facing the possibility of two life sentences when he is sentenced by Judge Ricardo Rigual on April 19.



Huffman

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