

Haine Announces Guilty Verdict For Attempted Murder; Convicted Shooter Now Faces Up To Life In Prison

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
August 21 2026 10:51 AM





EDWARDSVILLE — A Madison County jury found an Alton man guilty of attempted murder after prosecutors said he shot another man four times outside a Locust Street residence in Alton, Madison County State's Attorney Tom Haine announced on Friday, Aug. 21, 2026.

The jury found Samuel J. Chatman, 31, guilty of attempted murder, a Class X felony; aggravated battery with a firearm, a Class X felony; possession of a firearm by a repeat felon, a Class X felony; and aggravated discharge of a firearm, a Class 1 felony. Jurors deliberated about six hours before returning the verdict Thursday night.

The shooting happened April 22, 2026, outside a residence on Locust Street. Witnesses said the victim, Semaj J. Johnson-Joiner, was shot as he approached a vehicle that pulled in front of his mother's residence. Shots were fired from the vehicle, which then sped away.

Johnson-Joiner was shot in the face, chest, shoulder and hip. He received treatment at a St. Louis hospital and survived.

Alton Police investigated the case using video footage from businesses and residents, cellular phone records and license plate readers. Assistant State's Attorney Luke Yager said in his closing argument that detectives gathered and reviewed "video after video after video" to build a timeline of Chatman's presence in the area.

The investigation resulted in Chatman being taken into custody a few days after the shooting.

Yager and Assistant State's Attorney Zac Cato prosecuted the case. Haine commended the prosecution team and Alton Police.

"Yager and Cato took on a complicated case involving a violent shooting, worked quickly to master a tremendous volume of evidence, and effectively presented that evidence to a jury only four months later. That is not an easy task, particularly on a case that moved to trial so quickly," Haine said.

He added: "Violence in our community will be thoroughly investigated and aggressively prosecuted. This was an act of extreme violence, and we're grateful that the jury has held the defendant accountable."

Chatman remains in the Madison County Jail and will be sentenced later. The Class X felonies are punishable by up to 60 years in prison. The jury also made a special finding that Chatman personally discharged a firearm during the commission of the offense. The firearm enhancement means a term of 25 years to life will be added to Chatman's sentence.

Circuit Judge Tim Berkley presided at the trial, which began Tuesday, Aug. 18, 2026.

A co-defendant, Anthony L. Shanklin, 34, of Alton, is awaiting trial. Shanklin, who also is charged with attempted murder, is alleged to have been the driver of the vehicle.