

Man learns consequences of firing at cops during 33-hour hostage standoff in Dauphin County

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Mandatory sentences will ensure Derrick Hutcherson spends decades behind bars after he shot out his ex-girlfriend's eye and held their child and her 79-year-old grandmother hostage for more than a day during a June 2021 standoff in Lower Paxton Township.

Hutcherson's ex-girlfriend, Mariah Lewis — the woman he's convicted of trying to kill — survived her injuries to take the stand against him during a three-day trial in August. She recounted how she saw him draw the gun before she jumped from her balcony at the Pennswood apartment complex, and landed on the ground with a "jolting pain" in her left temple.

Police later arrested Hutcherson without harming him, even as he fired two shots at officers as they approached, District Attorney Fran Chardo said. That act will carry the most cumbersome part of his sentence.

Hutcherson, 41, will spend 84 years in state prison but will be eligible for parole after 42 years, per a sentence handed down by Dauphin County Judge Katherine McShane. The assault on a law enforcement officer charge carried a mandatory sentence of 20 to 40 years in prison. McShane also gave him 15 to 20 years for attempted murder, while the two kidnapping charges carried 10 to 20 years each.

During his Thursday sentencing hearing, Hutcherson also pleaded guilty to assault against a corrections officer in Dauphin County Prison, which tacked 2 to 4 years onto his sentence.

Lewis testified on Aug. 18 at trial that she spent four days in the hospital following the June 28, 2021, incident. Doctors couldn't save her eye, and now, she wears a glass one.

"It was shut [for] a month and a half," she said. "Wearing my prosthetic eye is not comfortable. I would not wear it if it wasn't for me wanting to look normal.

"It's a very dehumanizing feeling to lose something other people take for granted," she said. Hutcherson has been incarcerated since his June 2021 arrest, and he's been held without bail since 2022.

About a month after Lewis broke up with Hutcherson, Hutcherson found himself arguing with her mother in her home the morning of June 28, 2021. The argument ended with Lower Paxton police escorting him off the property. He left and came back, pulled a gun and pointed it at Lewis while she was on the apartment's second-floor balcony. Lewis jumped, and Hutcherson pulled the trigger.

For the next 33 hours, he held his and Lewis' 2-year-old son and Lewis' 79-year-old grandmother hostage in the home. He repeatedly called 911 dispatch, saying he killed Lewis, who survived but lost her eye in the process. Hutcherson called 911 throughout the standoff and delivered the following quotes, according to Chardo:

"I've got hostages, I've got hostages in here!" "If I get tired, it's over," and "I just killed my baby mama."

Jurors found Hutcherson not guilty of burglary or a general felony aggravated assault charge following the August trial. The decision, which came after jury questions about the breakdown of charges, suggests they believed he had a right to be inside Lewis' home and didn't intend to seriously injure officers.

Lewis and her mother spoke at Hutcherson's sentencing hearing, according to Chardo, while several people supported Hutcherson. PennLive couldn't reach Mary Klatt, Hutcherson's attorney, for comment.

At trial, Klatt characterized Hutcherson as a paranoid man "preparing for the end of the world... preparing for the end of his life." She said he shot into the ceiling multiple times to scare officers away, knew he was unraveling, and asked for a mental health doctor during the standoff.