

Man linked to Thomas convicted in shootout

■ Peter Langan, allegedly part of a robbery ring involving a Berks Countian, is found guilty on assault and weapons charges.

From our news services

COLUMBUS, Ohio - A man with alleged ties to Longswamp Township white supremacist Mark W. Thomas has been convicted in federal court here of charges stemming from a shootout with police.

A jury of eight women and four men deliberated three days before convicting Peter Langan, 39, of Columbus, on four of seven assault and weapons charges. The jurors could not reach a verdict

on the remaining counts.

Langan allegedly headed a ring suspected of robbing 22 Midwest banks in 1994 and 1995. Thomas has admitted helping organize the ring.

Thomas, the 46-year-old one-time leader of the Aryan Nations in Pennsylvania, and three others have pleaded guilty to lesser charges in the robberies.

Langan and another defendant, Scott A. Stedeford, 28, of Ardmore, Pa., pleaded not guilty

in March to conspiracy to commit bank robbery.

All five men remain in the custody of federal marshals.

Thomas and other members have testified the gang used profits from the robberies to support white-supremacist causes.

Langan was convicted Tuesday of assaulting federal agents; using a deadly weapon in a crime of violence; being a felon in possession of four firearms and more than 3,000 rounds of ammunition; and possession of an unregistered pipe bomb.

He was charged after a 10-second shootout with local and fed-

eral law-enforcement authorities in Columbus on Jan. 18, 1996. Langan suffered minor injuries in the shootout, but no officers were wounded.

The robbers taunted federal agents by wearing shirts with FBI logos and buying getaway cars in the names of retired FBI agents. On one occasion, a gang member wore a Santa Claus outfit to a robbery. Another time, the robbers placed a pipe bomb in an Easter basket.

An alleged gang member, Richard Lee Guthrie Jr., 38, who lived in the Baltimore area, hanged himself in a Covington,

Ky., jail in July 1996. Guthrie had pleaded guilty to federal bank robbery charges and had agreed to testify against Langan.

Another federal jury in Columbus convicted Langan Feb. 10 on five charges related to bank robberies in Columbus and the Cincinnati suburb of Springdale.

Judge John D. Holschuh presided over the latest trial, which started Aug. 25. Holschuh will sentence Langan following a

pre-sentence investigation.

Because Langan was convicted of three firearms counts in the two federal trials, he faces a minimum of 55 years in prison added to the punishment he will receive from his earlier bank robbery convictions and from the assault and weapons charges.

Prosecutors have until Oct. 28 to decide whether to retry Langan on the three counts on which jurors deadlocked.

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