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Man who set prominent Houston defense attorney on fire sentenced to 40 years in prison

HOUSTON- The man responsible for setting a prominent Houston defense attorney and his son on fire was sentenced to 40 years in prison on Wednesday.

Curtis Holliman, 35, was convicted of murder for the 2016 death of Dexter Taylor, 47. Taylor was the son of criminal defense attorney Kirby Taylor.

On the day of the crime, Holliman was living in Kirby Taylor's home when he accused the father and son of laughing at him. Holliman admitted to jurors that he "snapped" and ran upstairs to his room where he kept an open container of gasoline and a lighter. He returned downstairs and doused them with the gasoline and threw the lighter on them- igniting them both.

Kirby was severely burned and spent months undergoing physical therapy. Dexter suffered burns over 100 percent of his body and died eight hours after being set on fire.

Holliman's defense team argued that he was not in his right mind due to depression and bipolar disorder. The jury did not accept that explanation as they returned a guilty verdict in less than four hours Friday evening, on the third anniversary of the crime.

"Kirby Taylor watched his only child burn to death just a few feet away from him," Assistant District Attorney Jennifer Meriwether said. "That was the last time he saw his son alive—as he watched him fight for his life. We can only hope the jury's sentence gives him some sort of closure."

The jury returned the 40-year sentence after more than eight hours of deliberation.

The trial lasted six days and was additionally prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Kristina Roberts in the 178th District Court.

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