

News Release

For Immediate Release
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LIFE SENTENCE FOR MURDERER CAUGHT ON VIDEO

Charleston, S.C. – Solicitor Scarlett A. Wilson announced that on Wednesday a Charleston County jury convicted Tyrone Malcolm Benn of North Charleston of Murder and Possession of a Weapon During the Commission of a Violent Crime. Benn’s prior record consists of a 2003 conviction for strong arm robbery, 2011 conviction for distribution of marijuana and 2012 conviction for possession of marijuana.

Benn shot Samuel Coardes in front of a Spruill Avenue convenience store on the morning of July 12, 2014. Fortunately for the North Charleston Police Department the murder was captured on the store’s surveillance video.

Police were able to identify Benn from the video and arrested him later that day. Assistant Solicitor Burns Wetmore praised the North Charleston Police Department, saying “the relatively quick arrest took a violent criminal out of the community and headed off any possible retaliation.”

At the trial this week, Wetmore analyzed the surveillance video for the jury and argued that police smelled bleach at the arrest because Benn had washed evidence from his body. Assistant Solicitor Chris Lietzow, who also prosecuted the case, introduced an incriminating telephone call made by Benn from the jail.

Judge Deadra Jefferson gave Benn a life sentence for Murder and a concurrent five-year sentence for the weapon charge. After the trial, Wetmore said “The State thanks the jury for its verdict and the judge for an appropriate sentence in this case.”

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