

News Release

For Immediate Release
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Jury Convicts Robert Wright of Murder After Serious Assault Results in Victim's Death

Charleston, S.C. – February 26, 2014

Solicitor Scarlett Wilson announced that a Charleston County jury has found Robert Wright (DOB 5/25/1970) guilty of Murder. The jury handed down its verdict Tuesday evening following a two day trial. Upon conviction of murder, Mr. Wright faced a sentencing range of 30 years to life in prison. Judge Kristi Harrington sentenced Mr. Wright to 40 years.

Assistant Solicitors Chad Simpson and Jessica Baldwin prosecuted the case. Simpson recounted that the assault occurred around sunset on June 10, 2010, on Aiken Street downtown. The defendant's mother had recently ended a romantic relationship with the deceased, Christopher Jenkins, age 46 at the time. Following the breakup, Robert Wright, age 40, felt that Jenkins' unwanted contact with his mother and continued difficulties between them were an affront to his family. After a visit to his mother's house, the defendant saw Christopher Jenkins walking his two young nephews (ages 13 & 15) and one of their friends (age 13) through the neighborhood to the corner store. The defendant approached Christopher from behind, slammed him to the pavement, and threw several punches. He then began to forcefully stomp the victim as he lay defenseless on street. At some point, one of the boys tried to intervene, asking Mr. Wright to stop the assault. The defendant responded threatening the boy with violence as well.

Following the assault, the defendant drove away from the scene as the victim attempted to finish his walk to the store with his young nephews. He was unable to do so, however, and had to sit down in a friend's yard and rest. A Charleston Police Department Detective and Crime Scene Investigator testified that they found a trail of the victim's blood from the scene of the assault leading in the direction of the yard. The victim eventually walked back home, where he spent most of that night and the next day in a bedroom resting under the constant care of his mother, who wanted him to seek medical attention. The following afternoon his condition worsened and EMS was contacted. Mr. Jenkins died shortly after their arrival. Forensic Pathologist Dr. Nicholas Batalis testified that the cause of death was readily apparent. Mr. Jenkins had sustained a straight line break of 10 ribs. The breaks caused internal bleeding resulting in severe blood loss. He testified that the injuries were caused by blunt force trauma, consistent with the stomp of a foot "with great force."

Assistant Solicitor Chad Simpson stated, “It was clear from the evidence that Christopher Jenkins died as a result of a violent, malicious attack, and I’m happy that this jury correctly applied the law of this State and convicted Mr. Wright accordingly.” This was the second time the case had gone to trial. In 2012, a previous jury failed to reach a verdict on this case, so a mistrial was declared. “This case has been a very long and painful journey for the Jenkins family,” Simpson said, “so after a four year ordeal, I sincerely hope this verdict gives them some of the closure that they deserve.”

The defendant had previous criminal convictions for domestic violence, resisting arrest, and cocaine possession, as well as pending charges for domestic violence and domestic violence of a high and aggravated nature, arising from two separate incidents.

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