

News Release

For Immediate Release
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CO-DEFENDANTS SENTENCED TO 65 YEARS Charleston, S.C.

Solicitor Scarlett A. Wilson announced that a Charleston County jury found Denzel Heyward and Dashaun Simmons of Charleston County guilty of Armed Robbery, Attempted Murder, and Possession of a Firearm During a Crime of Violence on Friday evening. The jury was unable to reach a verdict as to the murder charge against each defendant. Defendant Heyward had been previously convicted of two counts of Armed Robbery as a juvenile and a Receiving Stolen Goods charge. Defendant Simmons had previously been convicted of Unlawful Carrying of a Weapon, Breach of Trust with Fraudulent Intent, Possession of Marijuana, Forgery, and Driving Under Suspension. Upon conviction, the Honorable Roger Young sentenced Heyward and Simmons to the maximum of thirty years on the Armed Robbery, thirty years on the Attempted Murder, and five years on the weapon charge, all to be served consecutively. Assistant Solicitors Jennifer Kneece Shealy and Nina Savas prosecuted the case for the Ninth Circuit Solicitor's Office.

On May 16, 2012, Denzel Heyward and Dashaun Simmons lured Kadeem Chambers, from Longs, South Carolina, to John's Island. Chambers' brother, Jujuan Hemingway, drove his brother to John's Island in his brother's car. Text messages from Chambers' phone and Heyward's phone reflect Heyward modifying the address a number of times as to where to meet. Chambers, age 20, and Hemingway, age 17, parked on Cynthia Drive, and were forced out of their vehicle by gunpoint by Heyward and Simmons, with Simmons using an assault weapon with a banana clip. The two young men were forced to lay on the pavement as the defendants yelled at the two asking where the money was. Heyward stomped on

Hemingway's head and repeatedly kicked him, knocking part of a tooth out and causing his teeth to bend backward in his mouth. Simmons fired once at Hemingway and barely missed his head. The defendants forced Hemingway to open the trunk of his brother's car, and he stole a suitcase and a bag of food. Heyward's girlfriend, who had driven the defendants to the location in her Plymouth, was ordered to look in the engine area presumably for money or drugs. Meanwhile, the two defendants continued assaulting Hemingway and holding the rifle to Chambers' head. As the Defendants were coming up empty handed, their frustration heightened. Simmons and Chambers began tussling. Simmons then shot Chambers twice, once in the leg and once in the chest. Chambers made his way back to his vehicle as his brother ran to safety, and the Defendants fled the scene in the Plymouth driven by Heyward's girlfriend. Chambers wrecked his vehicle into a parked car on Cynthia Drive.

The police arrived on scene after multiple 911 calls from neighbors and Hemingway. First responders found Chambers behind the wheel of the car pushing the gas pedal as he gasped for breath. Chambers told the officers that "Fat" did it. Heyward's nickname was Fat. Chambers died later in the morning at the hospital. Other officers found Hemingway hiding in a porta potty on a street behind Cynthia Drive.

Hemingway was interviewed after being released from the hospital. He gave details of the crime and later identified Heyward in a photographic lineup. On May 19, 2012, Heyward's girlfriend turned herself in and gave details of the crime and named Heyward and Simmons as the men responsible for the robbery and murder. The girlfriend and Hemingway testified at trial. According to Jennifer Kneece Shealy, "This crime was a horrific event in an otherwise quiet neighborhood. It shows the importance of witness cooperation. Heyward's girlfriend was encouraged by her family to do the right thing and turn herself in. Since we had no forensic evidence tying the defendants to the crime, the witness testimony was critical. Without Hemingway's and her cooperation, this case would have remained unsolved."