

News Release

For Immediate Release
June 14, 2016.

Charleston County Jury Convicts Rhajon Sanders of Attempted Murder after Unfounded Claim of Self Defense

On June 10, 2016, a Charleston County jury found defendant, Rhajon Sanders, guilty of Attempted Murder and Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Violent Crime. Circuit Court Judge Jeffrey Young sentenced Sanders to a total of 15 years in prison (10 years on Attempted Murder consecutive to 5 years on the firearm charge). Sanders did not have a prior record. Assistant Solicitors Nina L. Savas and Lauren Frierson prosecuted the case on behalf of the Ninth Circuit Solicitor's Office. Defense attorney, Myesha Brown, represented Sanders who claimed he acted in self-defense.

The incident occurred on December 26, 2014, on Kent Avenue in the City of North Charleston. At approximately 7:00 pm, Sanders was on his front porch carrying a loaded 9mm Taurus handgun. Across the street, the victim was outside in his Aunt's yard smoking a cigarette listening to music on his headphones. Sanders claimed he tried to get the victim's attention, but the victim did not hear Sanders. Sanders then walked from his front porch and opened fire. He shot at least 4 times all while children were playing in the yard. Sanders claimed the victim reached towards his waistband, and assumed he had a gun so he shot across the street. The victim was unarmed and testified he heard shots and then saw a fireball coming towards him. The victim suffered a single gunshot wound to his left leg. During surgery, the bullet was removed and a permanent metal rod was placed in the victim's leg.

North Charleston Police Department responded to the scene and a thorough investigation followed. Upon officers' arrival, Sanders waived his Miranda rights and confessed to shooting the victim. A search warrant was executed on Sanders' house, and the Taurus gun was recovered in his bedroom, along with an extended magazine cartridge. Sanders testified at trial and claimed self-defense though he acknowledged there were no prior verbal or physical altercations between him and the victim, nor were there any threats of any kind made by the victim. The Defendant attempted to justify his actions by presenting evidence that he lived in an unsafe neighborhood.

Assistant Solicitor Savas explained to the jury that self-defense is reserved for cases showing there was sufficient legal justification, however, in this case there were no such reasons. The fact that Sanders shot at the victim without any provocation is a terrifying notion and a blatant disregard for the safety and lives of others. Assistant Solicitor Savas stated, "This guilty verdict is a strong message to the community that the continued senseless acts of violence will not be tolerated."