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SCARLETT A. WILSON

Solicitor, Ninth Judicial Circuit

For Immediate Release:

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Jury Convicts Man of Ravenel Bridge DUI

Solicitor Scarlett A. Wilson announced that a Charleston County jury found Chazz Jonathan Roberts of Isle of Palms guilty of Driving under the Influence on Wednesday, July 18, 2018. The conviction was Roberts' second in the last six years, with a prior DUI conviction from 2012, stemming from an incident in Mt. Pleasant. The jury deliberated and returned the verdict Wednesday afternoon after a day and a half of trial. Roberts had also previously been convicted of Making a False Police Report and Assault. The Honorable Carmen Mullen sentenced Roberts to 3 years in prison, suspended to 90 days' service in the Charleston County Detention Center, followed by 3 years of probation. Solicitor Wilson stated, "DUI's investigations and prosecutions continue to be driven by 'technicalities' in the maze of the DUI laws. Mt. Pleasant Police Department's Officer Triana did especially good work at ensuring that the details were covered and that the department's professionalism was evident."

Shortly after 2:00AM on Saturday, April 16, 2016, a Mount Pleasant Police Department Officer stopped Roberts after he observed Roberts' vehicle swerving and traveling at more than 85 MPH over the Ravenel Bridge heading towards downtown Charleston. The arresting officer testified during trial that Roberts smelled of alcohol, that his speech was slurred, and that he became confused by simple requests and questions. After performing poorly on the standard field sobriety tests administered on scene, he was placed under arrest. The jury reviewed in-car and body-worn camera footage from that night, which showed Roberts' interactions with the officers and his performance on the standard field sobriety tests. After being arrested, Roberts provided a breath sample. His blood alcohol content was .17—over twice the legal limit.

Assistant Solicitor Daniel W. Cooper, who prosecuted the case, stated that "Thanks to the actions of the Mount Pleasant Police Department, no one was harmed by this brazen and dangerous combination of high speeds and high alcohol content. The jury quickly saw this case for what it was: a preventable situation caused by the reckless decisions of Chazz Roberts that could have ended far worse." Assistant Solicitor David DuTremble and Investigator Jeff Fort assisted in the prosecution of this case.

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