

News Release

For Immediate Release
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Jury Convicts Terrell Smith of Murder and Attempted Murder in Fatal Stabbing of Teenager

Charleston, S.C. – September 22, 2016

Solicitor Scarlett Wilson announced that this afternoon a Charleston County jury found Terrell Artieth Smith (DOB 10-19-96) guilty of Murder, Attempted Murder, and Possession of a Weapon During the Commission of a Violent Crime. The jury reached its verdict after a three day trial. Upon conviction of murder, Mr. Smith faces a sentencing range of 30 years to life in prison. Solicitor Wilson stated “This case is the perfect example of how witness cooperation leads to convictions.” Judge Kristi Harrington has deferred sentencing to December 12, 2016. Wilson explained, “Since Smith was a juvenile when he murdered the victim and faces a potential life sentence, recent case law (*Aiken v. Byars*) requires a hearing where the ‘*mitigating hallmark features of youth*’ are fully explored. That is the reason for the sentencing delay.”

Assistant Solicitors Charlie Patrick and Chad Simpson prosecuted the case. Mr. Patrick recounts that on Wednesday morning, June 11, 2014, Darryl Bennett awoke at around 7:00 AM. He got out of bed and checked in on his son, Brandon Bennett, who was asleep in the neighboring bedroom. He then began to go about his day. Sometime later, he heard a scuffle in his son’s bedroom, so he went back to investigate. He was shocked to find Smith standing over his son, stabbing him repeatedly.

Mr. Bennett ran to Brandon’s aid, grabbing the attacker to get him off of his son. During the struggle, Mr. Bennett said in horror, “you stabbed my boy!” to which Smith replied “I’ll kill you too!” Mr. Bennett was shoved into another room and Smith pounced on him. With his last dying effort, Brandon Bennett tried to save his Dad which gave Mr. Bennett enough time to bite the Smith’s forearm, causing Smith to drop the knife. Smith then ran from the house. Police and EMS responded quickly, but Brandon Bennett’s injuries proved fatal. Mr. Bennett was lucky to escape without any life threatening injuries.

Mr. Bennett’s cooperation and initiative helped law enforcement identify Terrell Smith, one of Brandon Bennett’s acquaintances. Smith was located and arrested 4 days later after he fled to Birmingham, Alabama. He was extradited back to South Carolina for trial. Mr. Bennett’s identification of Smith was corroborated and confirmed through DNA testing and crime scene analysis.

Assistant Solicitor Charlie Patrick stated, “I am extremely grateful that the jury was able to deliver justice for the victim and his family. The jury saw through the Defendant’s self-defense claim of a dice game gone bad. We thank everyone involved in the prosecution of this case, from start to finish. Most of all, we thank the family for all of their support and help in putting this case together.”

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