

# *News Release*

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For Immediate Release  
July 12, 2013

## **Alonda Desaussure sentenced to Life in prison for Armed Robbery**

**Charleston, S.C.** – Solicitor Scarlett A. Wilson announced that a Charleston County jury convicted 51-year-old Alonda Barron Desaussure of robbing and assaulting Daniel Cobiella at Gilroy’s Pizza on October 3, 2010. Because he had a 1987 conviction for assault with intent to commit criminal sexual conduct for which he had served a 30-year sentence and previously had been convicted of grand larceny, housebreaking, receiving stolen goods, burglary and two robberies, the Solicitor served Desaussure with notice of the State’s intent to seek a mandatory life sentence. The verdict was returned Wednesday night.

Upon his conviction, Circuit Court Judge Stephanie McDonald sentenced Desaussure to life in prison for the armed robbery. Solicitor Wilson stated, “Desaussure is the poster-child for seeking mandatory LWOP. We are extremely grateful that the victim and the witnesses took an interest in this case and helped secure a conviction for the community. Too often, that is not the situation we’re in.”

Attorney Aaron Mayer represented the Desaussure after taking over the case from the public defender when it last was called to trial in February of this year.

The armed robbery and assault occurred at approximately 9:00 p.m. on October 3, 2010. Assistant Solicitor Meg Haley stated that Desaussure had been begging for money on King Street earlier in the evening and had even asked two of the eye-witnesses for money. Several hours later, Desaussure entered Gilroy’s Pizza located at 353 King Street while Mr. Cobiella was cleaning in the back of the restaurant. Mr. Cobiella heard Desaussure enter the restaurant and remove the contents of the tip jar, so he confronted Desaussure and asked him to give back the money he had taken. They argued about the theft and walked out onto King Street, where the dispute escalated and Mr. Cobiella asked a witness to call 911. While the witness was on the phone with the 911 operator, Desaussure took a knife out of his pocket and slashed Mr. Cobiella’s face in order to escape with the tip money.

Mr. Cobiella and two witnesses provided police officers with a description of the Defendant, who had fled the scene on a bicycle. Shortly after midnight on October 4, 2010, Officer Jonathan Burns with the Charleston Police Department stopped Desaussure because he matched the description that had been put out over police radio earlier in the evening. After Burns located a kitchen knife on Desaussure, an eye-witness from the Gilroy’s incident happened to ride by on his bicycle and identify Desaussure as the Gilroy’s assailant.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant Solicitors Meg Haley and Spencer Compton. Two eye-witnesses and several law-enforcement officers testified at the three day trial. “The witnesses did a fantastic job and our community is better off with this criminal behind bars,” said Haley.

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