

News Release

For Immediate Release
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Michael Jason Maxwell sentenced to 85 years

Moncks Corner, S.C. – One day after his trial began, Defendant Michael Jason Maxwell decided to abandon the jury trial and enter a guilty plea to the charges of Murder and Burglary First Degree. Circuit Court Judge Kristi L. Harrington sentenced Maxwell to 60 years for Murder and a consecutive 25 years for Burglary in the First Degree, in the slaying of 20-year-old, Christopher Teseniar. In South Carolina, Murder (§ 16-3-10) carries a potential sentence ranging from a minimum of 30 years to a maximum of life.

Witness testimony revealed that the victim, Christopher Teseniar was gunned down in his sleep at approximately 4:40 a.m. on November 11, 2007. According to witnesses the defendant and the victim knew each other. Residents in Teseniar's home told police officers they saw two people exit the house, but were never able to identify the perpetrators. Maxwell's cell phone was found at the murder scene and witnesses revealed that the defendant thought the victim had stolen jewelry and pills from him and co-defendant Adam Tarpley. Tarpley gave a statement that he drove defendant Maxwell to a trailer and heard 2 shots. Tarpley had been expected to testify for the State but Defendant Maxwell pled guilty before Tarpley was called to the witness stand. Tarpley's case is expected to be tried later this summer. A second co-defendant, Annette Henderson, is charged with Accessory After the Fact of Murder for her alleged role in destroying evidence.

The Berkley County Coroner's Office pronounced the victim dead at the scene from gunshot wounds to the face and chest. Inmates reported to the Berkeley County Sheriff's Office that the defendant was bragging about the murder while incarcerated at the Hill-Finklea Detention Center in Moncks Corner

"This tragedy has been particular difficult for the family in light of the circumstances surrounding the murder. We are pleased with the result and hope that the victim's family will have some form of closure," said Senior Assistant Solicitor Dorie Biagianti.

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