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Melshaun Robinson Convicted of Murder and Sentenced to 33 Years

Charleston, S.C.-- Solicitor Scarlett Wilson announced today that a Charleston jury found Melshaun Robinson guilty of Murder, Assault and Battery in the First Degree, and Possession of a Weapon During a Violent Crime following a four-day jury trial last week. Robinson faced a minimum of 30 years and a maximum of Life in Prison Without Parole on the charge of murder. He was sentenced to 33 years' incarceration by the Honorable Deadra L. Jefferson, who presided over the trial. Solicitor Wilson stated, "Cooperating witnesses along with the team work of prosecutors and CPD investigators made this conviction possible. The jury paid close attention to the evidence and the defendant's testimony and delivered Robinson the justice he deserved."

Assistant Solicitors Sara Bozarth and Chad Simpson prosecuted the case against Robinson, assisted by Investigator Charles Jolliff. Blair Jennings represented Robinson. During the jury trial, evidence showed that Robinson shot 30-year-old Zabdiel Tinoco-Hernandez three times: twice in the back and once in the rear of his arm. Robinson also shot Hernandez's brother-in-law, Jaziel Armenta-Zavala, twice. Zavala survived and was able to testify at trial.

In April of 2021, the defendant was a bouncer at the King Street Cabaret, an adult night-club in the upper peninsula. The two brothers-in-law spent about an hour and half at the club during the early evening of Sunday, April 25, 2021. At approximately 8:20 PM, they were leaving to return home when they were confronted outside of the front door by the defendant. The defendant was angry at one of the men for his perceived short-changing of a dancer and alleged inappropriate behavior in the night club. After a brief verbal exchange at the door, the two victims continued to their vehicle. Meanwhile, the defendant retrieved a gun from the office inside and returned to the parking lot.

Video surveillance of the incident showed the defendant meet the patrons' truck as it was exiting, and the verbal dispute continued. After Robinson threw a rock at the side of their truck, the two victims exited the vehicle and began approaching the defendant. The two men stepped backwards when the defendant pointed his handgun at them. The defendant then chased Zavala around a vehicle with the gun pointed at his head. Upon catching Zavala, a brief row ensued. Hernandez came to his brother-in-law's aid but was thrown to the ground by the defendant, and then shot in his back as he lay face-down on pavement. As the two fled, Robinson continued to fire at them, striking Hernandez two more times and killing him. Zavala also was struck twice but survived his injuries.

The defense claimed that Robinson acted in self-defense. The jury ultimately agreed with the State and convicted Mr. Robinson on the most serious offense of murder, as well as Assault and Battery in the first degree for the shooting Zavala and Possession of a Weapon during Violent Crime.

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