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Solicitor, Ninth Judicial Circuit

For Immediate Release
July 18, 2025

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Ten Year Prison Sentence After Jury Convicted Man of Brutally Beating His Girlfriend

Charleston, S.C.-- Solicitor Scarlett Wilson announced today that a Charleston jury found Efrain Hernandez-Montero (d.o.b. 7/30/2002) guilty of Assault and Battery of a High and Aggravated Nature, Kidnapping and Possession of a Weapon During a Violent Crime following a four-day jury trial. Montero, who had no prior criminal convictions, faced a minimum of 5 years for the weapon charge and a maximum of 30 years on the kidnapping charge. He was sentenced to 10 years incarceration by the Honorable Dale E. Van Slambrook, who presided over the trial. Solicitor Wilson stated, "The Victim hopes that sharing this video will open people's eyes to the scourge of intimate partner violence. She wants the community to understand that domestic violence is real, whether or not it is captured on video. She wants other Victims to see how abuse looks from an objective standpoint and know that help is available. We applaud her courage."

Special Assistant Solicitor Benjamin Simpson and Assistant Solicitor Kasey Knox prosecuted the case against Hernandez-Montero, assisted by Investigator Joshua Pierce. Attorneys Ted Corvey and David Osborne represented the Defendant.

On Sunday afternoon, April 3, 2022, the Defendant and his girlfriend, the Victim, went to a pub on Maybank Highway, to have brunch and drinks. Their relationship had been volatile of late, with prior incidents of physical abuse and accusations of infidelity. After drinking for several hours, the Defendant began arguing with the Victim about his continued suspicions of infidelity. At some point, he became so angry that he crushed a glass in his hand, causing an injury which bled badly. Pub staff and the Victim treated the wound. The couple decided to leave the pub following the embarrassing incident. The Defendant was driving.

The argument continued in the truck and the Defendant threatened to call a friend to get a gun. The Victim attempted to take his phone to prevent a firearm entering the situation. This struggle, as well as the Defendant's admitted high level of anger and alcohol caused the Defendant to drive erratically. He pulled into "The Crescent" neighborhood off Folly Road and parked on a dead-end street.

As the argument escalated in the parked truck, the Victim became even more afraid and wanted to leave. The Defendant stopped her from doing so, at one point by strangling her and another by placing a knife to her throat. She tried different strategies to escape, and ultimately threw the Defendant's keys out the window, providing an adequate distraction to allow her to run away.

The terrified Victim ran to the porch of a nearby residence and began ringing the doorbell for help. The home belonged to a “Good Samaritan” whose porch was equipped with a ‘Ring’ security camera. The Defendant chased down the Victim and violently attacked her-- punching her several times in the face with a closed fist. As she slid to the ground, he continually kneed her in the face. During the shocking assault he also wrested her purse from her and took it back to his truck. As the Victim collected herself, she believed the Defendant had fled the area. She tried again to escape down Broughton Road on foot. The Defendant pursued her again at great speed and knocked her to the ground. He then picked her up and placed her over his shoulder and carried her down the street until dropping her. After dropping her, he screamed and spit at her.

Luckily for but unbeknownst to the Victim, heroic assistance was on the way. The owner of the home where the porch attack occurred, was at a nearby golf course. His security camera caught every instant of the horrifying attack, and he was notified via his phone of the new available video from his front porch camera. Without hesitation, the homeowner and another Good Samaritan, rushed to their vehicle and sped toward home to help. When they arrived, the shaken and battered Victim was nearing Folly Road. One man jumped from the car to assist her. The other continued into the neighborhood to find the Defendant walking in the Victim’s direction, brandishing the knife he had earlier held to her throat. The brave man courageously confronted the knife-wielding Defendant, scaring him to “shelter” in his truck. Law enforcement arrived shortly thereafter.

The Ninth Circuit Solicitor’s Office is especially appreciative of the Victim, who endured so much on that terrible day and in its aftermath. Likewise, the bravery of the Good Samaritans was the reason the Defendant did not continue stalking and beating the Victim. Charleston Police Department’s lead investigator Sgt. Michael Christophersen helped our office put the pieces of evidence together. Special Assistant Solicitor Simpson stated, “The Victim’s resilience over the past three years has been remarkable, she carried the weight of this case with strength and dignity to its final just conclusion.” As always, the Ninth Circuit Solicitor’s office appreciates the time and attentiveness of the jury in this matter.

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