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For Immediate Release
November 13, 2025

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Jury Convicts Mark Dwayne Walton of Accessory After the Fact to Murder and Desecration of Human Remains, sentenced to 25 years.

Charleston, S.C.-- Solicitor Scarlett Wilson announced today that a Charleston jury found Mark Dwyane Walton guilty of Accessory After the Fact to Murder and Desecration of Human Remains following a week-long jury trial. Walton faced a maximum of 15 years on the Accessory charge and a maximum of 10 years on the charge of Desecration. He was sentenced to the maximum sentence, 25 years' consecutive incarceration, by the Honorable Charles J. McCutchen, who presided over the trial.

Assistant Solicitors Benjamin Simpson and Tyra Roberts prosecuted the case against Walton, assisted by Investigator Joshua Pierce. Mr. Walton was represented by attorneys J. Scott Bischoff, II, and William Sean McGuire of the law firm of Adams & Bischoff.

On February 27, 2020, Buddy Carr, age 32, traveled to Charleston from the Spartanburg area in his white Ford F-150 pickup to visit Mark Walton, age 36. The two were longtime friends, both claiming past associations with well-known motorcycle club, the Hell's Angels. Buddy traveled to Charleston primarily for the purpose of attending a funeral with Mark. Upon his arrival on Thursday, however, he and Mark planned to go out drinking together. At the time, Mark Walton was staying with his girlfriend, Gina Scialdone, age 23, in the Westchase Apartment Complex in West Ashley, Charleston County.

Early in the night, both men were already displaying signs of intoxication, talking loudly, and acting obnoxiously in the opinion of staff at a bar they patroned. After leaving one bar around 9:30 p.m., the group returned to the West Ashley apartment complex. Celia Sweeney, a 28-year-old, lived in the same complex. She worked with Gina, Mark's girlfriend, at the King Street Grill on Kiawah Island. Through work, she and Gina had fast become close friends and lived a short walk from each other; so, after the brief stop at Gina's, the group went to Celia's apartment to meet up with her and continue socializing. At Celia's apartment, the males, particularly Buddy Carr, acted drunk and obnoxious, so Celia encouraged the group to move from her residence to another bar.

'Trayce's Too' was a bar located nearby, and the group migrated there. Trayce's Too was equipped with thorough security surveillance, so the events at this location are well-documented. Gina began feeling ill shortly after arrival. She argued with Mark, who eventually agreed to take her home in Buddy Carr's truck. Mark took Gina home around midnight, but returned to the bar by 12:15 a.m., February 28, 2020. Eventually, the men were kicked out of Trayce's Too and not allowed to re-enter.

Around 1:30 a.m., all three returned to Celia's apartment. Mark left Buddy at Celia's apartment and attempted to return to Gina's apartment. Celia was furious that the obnoxious Buddy was left alone in her apartment. Mark ignored Celia's pleas to come get his friend and instead made his way back to Gina's apartment where he crawled through a window. Gina was awoken by Mark's entry through the window and an argument ensued between the two of them. Mark claimed he passed out after the argument. The evidence at trial strongly contradicted this assertion.

Back at Celia's, she informed others that she was angry and going to wake up the passed-out Buddy Carr and throw him out of her apartment. These were the last known living communications of 28-year-old Celia Sweeney.

Evidence presented during the week-long trial proved, rather than being passed out for the rest of the night as he claimed, the defendant Mark Walton was back at Celia Sweeney's apartment a short time after her last communications and remained for some time. Circumstantial evidence proved that Mark Walton assisted Buddy Carr in moving Celia's automobile to an economically disadvantaged neighborhood and returned together in Buddy's truck. Video evidence presented showed that Buddy Carr traveled to a nearby Home Depot the following morning and purchased a black 'Husky 45 Gallon Tote' and that a short time later, he returned to the same Home Depot with Defendant Mark Walton, the Husky Tote now in the cab of the pickup containing the body of Celia Sweeney. The two both gave the Tote in the back of the pickup direct attention before they went inside to purchase more supplies. Inside, they purchased four bags of cement, a strap to tie down the Tote containing Celia Sweeney's body, and latex gloves from the Home Depot. The two returned to the truck and together loaded the new supplies. The defendant was careful to put on gloves before touching any of the items. They then worked together to strap the Tote to the side of the pickup cab before stopping at a nearby Chick-fil-A drive through. Surveillance cameras at the drive through showed that that Tote was fastened closed with a charging wire in the same manner in which it was later discovered, hundreds of miles from Charleston.

Investigation eventually led to the residence of Buddy Carr in Inman, South Carolina. On Monday, March 2nd, 2020, several agencies, including SLED, descended upon 704 O'Henry Drive with a search warrant. They discovered Buddy Carr's white Ford F-150 stuck in the mud behind his mobile home near a tree line. Just inside the tree line, they located a black 45-gallon Husky Tote. Inside the Husky Tote, they discovered the badly beaten body of Celia Sweeney, stuffed inside the box, the victim of over 40 blunt force blows to her skull with what is believed to be the back side of a hammer (which was also located in the passenger side door panel of Buddy Carr's truck). Inside the residence, on the couch in the living room, the deceased body of Buddy Carr was also discovered. In his hands was a firearm. He suffered a single gunshot wound to the head. Analysis of the scene and injuries led medical experts to conclude that the fatal gunshot wound was self-inflicted.

Following a week-long trial on the offenses of Accessory After the Fact to Murder and Desecration of Human Remains, a Charleston Jury convicted Mark Walton of both charges for the assistance rendered to Buddy Carr and his treatment of her body, and he was sentenced to 25 years. The Ninth Circuit Solicitor's Office is especially appreciative of the Sweeney family, who endured so much that terrible day and in the years to follow to see this matter to its resolution, as well as Gina Scialdone and Patrick Stanborough, who suffered unfair and untrue accusations of involvement while also mourning the loss of a loved one. Assistant Solicitor Tyra Roberts added, "without the longstanding support of witnesses, we would have never achieved the just result for Celia Sweeney received today." As always, the Ninth Circuit Solicitor's office appreciates the time and attentiveness of the jury in this matter.