

NEWS RELEASE

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February 22, 2018

2 defendants tried for property crimes; 4 others plead guilty

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – The Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Crimes Against Property Team recently tried two defendants in Superior Court. Another four defendants entered guilty pleas. The proceedings were held February 12-19, 2018, before The Honorable Nathaniel J. Poovey and The Honorable W. Robert Bell, Superior Court Judges.

Armand Washington, 25, was tried for 1) possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, 2) breaking or entering a motor vehicle, 3) larceny of a firearm, 4) possession of a stolen firearm and 5) misdemeanor possession of stolen goods. The jury found Washington *guilty* of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, possession of a stolen firearm and misdemeanor possession of stolen goods. The jury found him *not guilty* of breaking or entering a motor vehicle and larceny of a firearm. Judge Poovey sentenced Washington to 12-24 months in prison.

James Hoffman, 54, was tried for insurance fraud. At the close of the State's evidence, Judge Poovey dismissed the charge.

Christopher Baucom, 28, pled guilty to interfering with a manned aircraft by an unmanned aircraft system. Judge Bell sentenced him to 6-17 months in prison. In March 2016, Charlotte-Mecklenburg police were pursuing a suspect with outstanding warrants in the area of Central Avenue in Charlotte. A police helicopter was dispatched to the scene to help locate the suspect. While officers on the ground were setting up a perimeter for their search, they saw Baucom launch a drone. Officers approached Baucom, informed him that a helicopter was flying overhead and asked him to land the drone. Baucom refused, and the helicopter was forced to abandon its search for fear of a collision with the drone. Baucom eventually landed the drone and was arrested. His sentence will be served concurrent with a sentence imposed for another felony conviction in Cabarrus County.

Amir Banawan, 21, pled guilty to unauthorized use of a motor vehicle. Judge Poovey sentenced Banawan to 120 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 12 months of supervised probation. As a condition of his probation, Banawan must perform 24 hours of community service.

Joseph Burns, 20, pled guilty to misdemeanor larceny. Judge Poovey sentenced Burns to 45 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 12 months of supervised probation.

Wallace Earley, 24, pled guilty to 1) attempted second-degree burglary and 2) possession of drug paraphernalia. Judge Poovey sentenced Earley to 45 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail. He was also sentenced to an additional 6-17 months in custody; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 24 months of supervised probation. As a condition of his probation, Earley must comply with the conditions of drug treatment court.

Note: For more information about the District Attorney's Office, visit www.charmeckda.com. For updates and other information, "like" the DA's Office on Facebook at www.facebook.com/charmeckda and follow us on Twitter: @CharMeckDA.

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