

NEWS RELEASE

R. Andrew Murray
District Attorney

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2 defendants tried for property, firearm crimes; 5 others plead guilty

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – The Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Crimes Against Property Team recently tried one defendant, and the DA's Crimes Against Persons Team convicted a felon at trial. Two additional defendants pled guilty to property crimes when their cases were called for trial, and three others pled guilty before their cases were called for trial. The proceedings were held March 2-11, 2015, before The Honorable Julia L. Gullett and The Honorable W. Robert Bell, Superior Court Judges.

Azell Montgomery, 19, was tried for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. The jury found him *guilty*. Judge Gullett sentenced Montgomery to 12-24 months in prison. In February 2014, Mecklenburg County Sheriff's deputies went to a Charlotte home to serve a warrant on a woman. As deputies took their tactical positions around the house, one saw Montgomery inside, holding a sawed-off shotgun. When deputies knocked on the door, Montgomery tried to flee through another door but was apprehended. The gun was found under a mattress in the home.

Catoine Funderburk, 20, was tried for breaking or entering a motor vehicle. The jury returned a verdict of *not guilty*.

When Alando Nesbit, 43, was called for trial for 1) felony breaking or entering and 2) larceny after breaking or entering, Nesbit pled guilty as charged. He was sentenced to 9-20 months in prison.

The State also called Michelle Tibbs, 39, for trial for felony exploitation of a disabled adult. Upon being called for trial, Tibbs pled guilty. Tibbs was sentenced to 13-25 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending her successful completion of 60 months of supervised probation. As conditions of her probation, Tibbs must serve 45 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail and pay \$32,316.76 in restitution to the victim.

John Blackwelder, 31, pled guilty to 1) felony breaking or entering and 2) larceny after breaking or entering. Blackwelder was sentenced to 16-29 months in prison, and he was ordered to pay \$250 in restitution to the victim.

Ryan Merchant, 26, pled guilty to 1) three counts of larceny from a merchant and 2) possession of heroin. Merchant was sentenced to 8-19 months in prison. He was also ordered to pay \$579.91 in restitution.

Deante Brown, 23, pled guilty to 1) felony larceny, 2) 11 counts of breaking or entering a motor vehicle, 3) attempted breaking or entering a motor vehicle and 4) misdemeanor larceny. Brown was sentenced to 5-15 months in prison. Brown was also sentenced to an additional 5-15 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 30 months of supervised probation. Brown was ordered to pay \$5,002 in restitution and to wear an electronic monitoring device for the first six months of his probation.

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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