

NEWS RELEASE

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Seven defendants convicted in murder cases

CHARLOTTE, NC – Seven defendants pled guilty in murder cases in Mecklenburg County Superior Court before The Honorable Richard D. Boner, Superior Court Judge. The defendants entered their guilty pleas in administrative courtroom 5350 on Thursday, September 1, 2011.

Steven Elam, 41, pled *guilty* to (1) second-degree murder and (2) two counts of robbery with a dangerous weapon; he was sentenced to 384-489 months in prison. The defendant's crimes were committed in 2004 and were solved by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's (CMPD) Homicide Cold Case Unit. On November 21, 2004, around 6:30p.m., the defendant carjacked a man and woman at gunpoint in a grocery store parking lot on Central Avenue and drove off in their van. The defendant drove the van two and a half miles down Central Avenue and parked it in an apartment complex. There, he got out and approached Ronnie Page, 32, who had just pulled into the complex. The defendant pointed his revolver at Mr. Page and ordered him out of the car. The defendant then shot Mr. Page and dragged him out of the car and onto the ground. The defendant fled the scene in Mr. Page's car, but abandoned it that same evening. Around 7:30p.m., Mr. Page died at the hospital. Both vehicles were swabbed for DNA and the CMPD crime lab determined that the same male DNA profile was found in each vehicle. The DNA samples were entered into the national offender DNA database. In 2010, the database generated a match to the defendant's DNA. The defendant was interviewed by CMPD homicide detectives and he confessed to the crimes. The defendant said he stole the vehicles in an attempt to elude some men who were chasing him. He said he was being chased because he had just stolen a kilo of cocaine from the men.

Justus Moss, 31, pled *guilty* to (1) second-degree murder and (2) discharging a firearm into an occupied vehicle; he was sentenced to 221-284 months in prison. The victim, Demetrio Calvillo, 36, was shot and killed on April 3, 2008, at 9:30 a.m. Mr. Calvillo was employed by Sani-Can Service, Inc. He was in the process of turning his work truck around on the defendant's property when the defendant came out of his home, confronted Mr. Calvillo about being on his property, and shot Mr. Calvillo one time in the face. Since the murder, the defendant has been receiving mental health treatment for a mental illness that was undiagnosed at the time of the murder.

Tiarice Robinson, 24, pled *guilty* to second-degree murder and was sentenced to 189-236 months in prison. The murder occurred May 28, 2005, at approximately 10:40 p.m. outside a home in the Hidden Valley neighborhood. Residents of the home were hosting a party. The defendant was standing outside the house when the victim, Corey Stowe, 17, and his friends came to pick up another friend who was attending the party. After picking up his friend, Mr. Stowe went up the street, made a u-turn and drove back by the house. As Mr. Stowe drove by the house, the defendant shot at the car 6 or 7 times with his pistol. Mr. Stowe was shot once in the back of the head and drove his car off the road and down an embankment. He was taken to CMC and died the following day.

Danielle Alexandra Holmes, 18, and Jonathan Tyler Fitzgerald, 19, each pled *guilty* to 1) second-degree murder, 2) robbery with a dangerous weapon, and 3) conspiracy to commit robbery with a dangerous weapon. Each defendant was sentenced to 246-323 months in prison.

On August 22, 2010, at approximately 12:00 p.m., CMPD officers were called to an apartment complex on Central Avenue in reference to a stabbing. Officers arrived to find the victim, Oscar Alvarado Chavez, 22, inside a green vehicle. He had been stabbed once in the chest and twice in the neck, and had numerous defensive wounds on his hands. Witnesses had called 911 to report suspicious activity in the parking lot and had provided a description of a white vehicle leaving the scene. They were also able to give police the tag number from the suspect vehicle. Officers spoke to the owner of the white vehicle, who advised that he took the defendants to meet the victim for the purpose of purchasing heroin. When they reached the designated place for the drug transaction, Defendant Holmes exited the vehicle and entered Mr. Chavez's vehicle to make the purchase. Defendant Fitzgerald then approached Mr. Chavez's vehicle on the driver's side, and attacked him. Officers later located the defendants at a hotel. A search of their room revealed 2 knives in the toilet tank along with bloody clothing that contained Mr. Chavez's DNA. Both defendants admitted their participation in the robbery and murder of Mr. Chavez for heroin.

Cherelle Griffin, 20, pled *guilty* to (1) second-degree murder and (2) discharging a firearm into an occupied vehicle and was sentenced to 239-305 months in prison in the murder of Devon Clement, 20. Because charges remain pending on co-defendants in this case, a factual summary will not be included at this time.

Kevin Hernandez, 17, pled *guilty* to (1) conspiracy to commit first-degree murder and (2) encouraging gang activity; he was was sentenced to 204-255 months in prison in the murder of Alenjandro Leon-Martinez, 34. Because charges remain pending on co-defendants in this case, a factual summary will not be included at this time.

Note: Almost all guilty pleas entered in criminal administrative court are the result of an agreed upon plea arrangement between the State and the defendant, which is then approved by the sentencing judge. For more information about why most cases must be resolved by plea negotiation instead of jury trial, please visit the "Understanding Criminal Court" section of the DA's website at www.charmeckda.com.

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