

NEWS RELEASE

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Man pleads guilty to assault charges after apologizing to victim during trial

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – A man who shot four people recently pled guilty in the midst of his trial after apologizing to a victim during a court recess. Another four defendants – all felons in illegal possession of firearms – were also convicted during the Violent Crimes Team's most recent trial session. The proceedings were held during the week of December 16, 2019, before The Honorable George C. Bell and The Honorable Lisa C. Bell, Superior Court Judges.

Rashawn Franks, 29, was called for trial on the charges of 1) attempted first-degree murder, 2) assault with a deadly weapon with the intent to kill inflicting serious injury, 3) two counts of assault with a deadly weapon inflicting serious injury, 4) possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and 5) discharging a weapon into occupied property. A jury was selected, and the State began presenting evidence. During testimony, one of the victims identified Franks in open court. During a recess, when Franks was taken back into custody, he apologized to the victim for what he had done. Then, Franks pled guilty as charged. Judge George C. Bell sentenced Franks to 190-240 months in prison. In June 2018, Franks got into a verbal altercation at a convenience store in Charlotte after another car had slightly blocked his parked car. Surveillance footage showed that, as Franks' car drove away, multiple shots were fired out of the passenger window toward the other driver and the store. The victim who had parked behind Franks' car, as well as three other people who were standing outside the store, were shot.

Caleb Eaves, 26, pled guilty to 1) two counts of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and 2) assault by strangulation. Judge Lisa C. Bell sentenced Eaves to 13-25 months in prison.

Shann Gabriel, 44, pled guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Judge Lisa C. Bell sentenced Gabriel to 13-25 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 24 months of supervised probation. As a condition of his probation, Gabriel must serve 111 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail.

Thomas Whitlock, 28, pled guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Judge Lisa C. Bell sentenced Whitlock to 13-25 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 24 months of supervised probation. As a condition of his probation, Whitlock must serve 90 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail.

Fredrick Edwards, 26, pled guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Judge Lisa C. Bell sentenced Edwards to 12-24 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 24 months of supervised probation. As a condition of his probation, Edwards must serve 90 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail.

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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