

NEWS RELEASE

R. Andrew Murray
District Attorney

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Man resentenced to life in prison for 1997 murder

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Melvin James Hardy, 36, was resentenced today to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Hardy was previously sentenced to death for the 1997 murder of 41-year old Andrew Ray.

In 1998, the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Office tried and convicted Hardy of 1) first-degree murder and 2) robbery with a dangerous weapon. Hardy plotted the robbery and murder of Mr. Ray, who was Hardy's manager at a Hardee's restaurant in Charlotte. With the help of a coworker, Hardy smuggled a shotgun into the restaurant on the evening of March 20, 1997. Then, Hardy went into the kitchen with the gun and ordered Mr. Ray to open the safe. Hardy shot Mr. Ray one time, killing him. Hardy split the money with coworkers and fled the scene. The jury determined that Hardy should be sentenced to death.



Melvin James Hardy

The North Carolina Supreme Court upheld the conviction and the death sentence. Years later, however, a Superior Court judge found that Hardy's defense attorneys failed to provide adequate representation at the sentencing hearing, and the judge overturned the death sentence.

The District Attorney's Office met with Mr. Ray's family to discuss whether the State should empanel a new jury and again seek the death penalty. The District Attorney's Office and the Ray family agreed to allow the defendant to be sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Today, The Honorable Robert T. Sumner, Superior Court Judge, resentenced Hardy to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

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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