

NEWS RELEASE

Spencer B. Merriweather III
District Attorney

September 24, 2021

Jury convicts man as accessory in fatal drive-by shooting

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Xavier Underwood, who was the driver of the vehicle involved in a drive-by shooting that killed 30-year-old Tony Jamarr Russell, was convicted by a Mecklenburg County jury today and sent to prison. The trial began September 14, 2021, and ended today with the jury's guilty verdict. The proceedings were held in courtroom 5370 before The Honorable Louis A. Trosch, Jr., Superior Court Judge.

The Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Homicide Team tried Underwood, 26, for accessory after the fact to first-degree murder. The jury found him *guilty* as charged. Judge Trosch then sentenced him to 59-83 months in prison.

In June 2016, Mr. Russell and a woman were walking along Tuckaseegee Road when a car pulled up alongside him, and two occupants, Jordan Ardrey and Zhaymalik Phillips, began firing. Mr. Russell and the woman were both struck by the gunfire. Mr. Russell's wound was fatal, and he was pronounced deceased at the scene. The woman survived. Investigators spent months analyzing evidence and conducting interviews to solve the crime. In 2017, Charlotte-Mecklenburg police identified Ardrey and Phillips as the shooters and Underwood as the driver.

In July 2021, [the Homicide Team tried Zhaymalik Phillips](#) for Mr. Russell's death. The jury found him guilty of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. The jury was unable to reach unanimous verdicts on other charges related to the homicide, and ultimately, Phillips pled guilty to voluntary manslaughter. He was sentenced to 72-99 months in prison.

In August 2021, Ardrey pled guilty to voluntary manslaughter and was sentenced to 59-83 months in prison.

Note: For more information about the District Attorney's Office, visit www.charmeckda.com. For updates and other information, follow @CharMeckDA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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