

**District Attorney's
Office**
State of North Carolina
26th Prosecutorial District
Mecklenburg County

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NEWS RELEASE

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Violent Crimes Team trial session leads to guilty verdicts, pleas

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Working in three Mecklenburg County Superior Court courtrooms, the District Attorney's Violent Crimes Team tried five defendants in a two-week trial session during the weeks of November 14 and November 28, 2022. Another five defendants entered guilty pleas. The proceedings were held before The Honorable J. Thomas Davis, The Honorable Jason C. Disbrow, The Honorable Robert C. Ervin, The Honorable George C. Bell, and The Honorable Gregory R. Hayes, Superior Court Judges.

Shelton Smith, 34, was tried for 1) two counts of attempted first degree murder, 2) two counts of assault on a law enforcement officer with a firearm, and 3) possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. The jury found the defendant guilty of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. The jury found the defendant not guilty of one count of attempted first degree murder and one count of assault on a law enforcement officer with a firearm. As to the remaining charges, the jurors were unable to reach unanimous verdicts. As a result, Judge Ervin declared a mistrial as to those charges. Sentencing will be held at a later date.

Valentino Johnson-Bryant, 24, was tried for robbery with a dangerous weapon. The jury returned a verdict of guilty of attempted robbery with a dangerous weapon. Judge Davis sentenced Johnson-Bryant to 51 to 74 months in prison.

Javier Ruiz, 33, was tried for 1) two counts of felony hit and run inflicting injury and 2) felony fleeing to elude arrest. The jury returned verdicts of guilty of felony hit and run inflicting injury, misdemeanor hit and run, and felony fleeing to elude arrest. Judge Disbrow sentenced Ruiz to 14 to 36 months in prison.

Eric Crump II, 31, was tried for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. The jury returned a verdict of guilty. Judge Davis sentenced Crump to 14 to 26 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending Crump's successful completion of 30 months of supervised probation. As a condition of probation, Crump must serve 45 days in jail.

Nona Teah, 28, was tried for felony hit and run inflicting serious injury or death. The jury returned a verdict of not guilty.

Eugene Hazen, 45, pled guilty to 1) robbery with a dangerous weapon, 2) attempted robbery with a dangerous weapon, and 3) two counts of assault inflicting serious bodily injury. Judge Ervin sentenced Hazen to 97 to 129 months in prison.

James Whitley, 60, pled guilty to assault with a deadly weapon inflicting serious injury. Judge Davis sentenced Whitley to 31 to 47 months in prison.

Elijah Graham, 21, pled guilty to 1) conspiracy to commit robbery with a dangerous weapon and 2) possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Judge Hayes sentenced Graham to 30 to 48 months in prison.

Christian Chandler, 26, pled guilty to felony hit and run inflicting injury. Judge Bell sentenced Chandler to 6 to 17 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending Chandler's successful completion of 24 months of supervised probation.

Janci Hernandez, 21, pled guilty to simple assault. Judge Ervin sentenced Hernandez to 45 days in jail; that sentence was suspended pending Hernandez's successful completion of 12 months of supervised probation.

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