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SCARLETT A. WILSON

Solicitor, Ninth Judicial Circuit

LIFE SENTENCE FOR CAREER CRIMINAL WHO RUINED SMALL BUSINESS OWNER'S AMERICAN DREAM

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Charleston, S.C.— Solicitor Scarlett A. Wilson announced that the Honorable Roger Young sentenced Darnell Dwayne Brown to the State Department of Corrections for the remainder of his natural life without the possibility of parole for executing Jagdishbhai Patel on June 25, 2022. Brown had previously been convicted of two Armed Robberies and had been released from the Department of Corrections for only four months prior to murdering Mr. Patel in the business he owned with his wife. The Defendant was convicted by a Charleston County jury on June 6, 2025, following four days of testimony. Solicitor Wilson stated, “Mr. Patel brought his family to the United States to pursue the American dream of becoming a citizen and owning a small business. He did both by the book, only to be executed by a home-grown murderer.”

Assistant Solicitors Lemuel Zeigler and Jordan Norvell presented the State’s case which included testimony from former North Charleston Detective Denis Woods as well as three SLED Laboratory scientists. Detective Woods led a thorough investigation that eliminated any other suspects, located the murder weapon which was matched to a fired bullet at the crime scene, and secured the Defendant’s clothing and gloves which tested positive for gunshot residue particles. Mr. Patel was murdered at his Charleston Heights Motel. Surveillance from a residence behind the motel showed the killer wearing clothing that matched clothing the Defendant was shown wearing in another surveillance video from nearby. After the murder, the Defendant was located less than two-tenths of a mile from the crime scene. He had a backpack containing a registration card for the motel, a room key from the motel, and gloves that later resulted with a positive match for gunshot residue particles. He was found 50 yards from where officers uncovered a .38 special revolver that still housed fired casings. The revolver was found under the trailer skirt at the address listed on the Defendant’s driver’s license. Crime scene investigators located a fired bullet and SLED scientists were able to confirm that the revolver fired the shot which struck Mr. Patel. The Defendant also made incriminating statements to NCPD Detectives.

Because the Defendant had two prior convictions for the Most Serious offenses of Armed Robbery, the State served notice that required a mandatory life sentence upon conviction. As Assistant Solicitor Zeigler stated to the jury, “the Patel family believed that if they were gentle with people while operating their motel, people would be gentle with them. That was true until Darnell Brown approached Mr. Patel and shot him. This was not a robbery. This was not an argument. This was an execution.” North Charleston Police Department conducted a thorough investigation which laid the foundation for this conviction. Solicitor’s Office Investigator Dustin Morris coordinated with the involved agencies. Zeigler also stated, “We are grateful to the Patel family for their sincere and incredible strength in the face of this unnecessary violence.”

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