

News Release

For Immediate Release
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CO-DEFENDANTS SENTENCED TO LIFE

Charleston, S.C.

Solicitor Scarlett A. Wilson announced that a Charleston County jury found Jeremiah Fitzgerald Belton (aka Finger) and King Chevais Conyers (aka Bez), previously of Charleston County, guilty of Murder, Burglary 1st, and Possession of a Firearm During a Crime of Violence. The jury returned the verdict Friday afternoon after a week of trial. Defendant Belton had been previously convicted of Accessory after Murder, Possession of Crack, Voluntary Manslaughter, Purchasing Body Armor by a Violent Offender, Failure to Stop for a Blue Light, Resisting Arrest with a Deadly Weapon, Possession of a Stolen Vehicle, Driving Under Suspension and a Receiving Stolen Goods. Defendant Conyers had previously been convicted of Resisting Arrest, Breaking and Entering an Automobile, Malicious Injury to Personal Property, and Assault with Intent to Kill . Due to the State's filing of a Notice of Intent to Seek Life Without Parole based on his prior record, Belton received a mandatory life sentence upon his conviction. Conyers did not face a mandatory life sentence but the Honorable Kristi Harrington used her discretion to also sentence Conyers to Life without the Possibility of Parole.

Assistant Solicitors Jennifer Kneece Shealy and Daniel Cooper prosecuted the case for the Ninth Circuit Solicitor's Office.

On July 9, 2010, Mario Caldwell along with Troy Mason traveled to Charlotte to pick up Jeremiah Belton (Finger). Once Caldwell and Mason pick up Belton in Charlotte, Belton insisted on picking up Curtis Delaney (aka Crime). From Charlotte, the four men travel to West Columbia to pick up King Conyers (Bez). After picking up Conyers, the five men traveled to

Charleston. The five men and two unnamed males arrived at Delaney's girlfriend's home and, upon Conyers' suggestion, discussed the plans to rob Melvin Simmons, Jr. of drugs and money. The men traveled in two cars to Old Georgetown Road in McClellanville and entered the home around 4:00 am. Mason, Caldwell, Conyers, Delaney, and Belton, were all armed and approached the front door. A shootout occurred between the homeowner and the intruders. Troy Mason was shot by the homeowner Simmons. Simmons was shot and killed. Delaney was shot and killed by the homeowner's girlfriend.

Troy Mason arrived at Trident Hospital later the morning of July 10th. He gave a false accounting of what occurred. Blood swabs from the scene were compared to Mason's DNA sample; a match was made. Mason turned himself in. Caldwell, Belton, and Conyers were subsequently arrested.

Only one individual was arrested in 2010. The Solicitor's Office with the help of the Charleston County Sheriff's Office investigated to determine who the other home invaders were. Caldwell was arrested in 2012 after the investigators secured a cooperative witness. Belton and Conyers were arrested in 2014 after another witness cooperated and their information was corroborated through a variety of records including those establishing their whereabouts on the days leading up to and of the murders. This process was time consuming and meticulous but eventually resulted in the convictions. Solicitor Wilson stated, "I'm proud of our team for working hard to chase down every lead to see that everyone involved was held accountable. This case could have easily died on the vine if our prosecutors and investigators hadn't pushed so hard and been so thorough."

Jennifer Shealy stated, "The jury's attentiveness throughout the week was impressive and we are grateful for their resolve to get to the truth. Belton and Conyers have created mayhem in the streets of Charleston for years." Delaney and Conyers were previously arrested together in 2002 in Charleston regarding a murder, though evidentiary problems forced a dismissal of the charges against Conyers and a plea to Accessory After the Fact of Murder for Delaney.