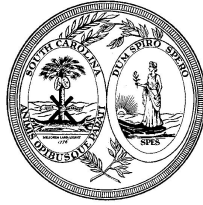


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News Release

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For Immediate Release
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Berkeley County man sentenced to 30 years in prison in guilty plea to Attempted Murder, Domestic Violence of a High and Aggravated Nature

Moncks Corner, S.C. – Solicitor Scarlett A. Wilson announced that on Wednesday afternoon, defendant Christopher Holmes pled guilty to the Attempted Murder of and Domestic Violence against his former live-in girlfriend, Elizabeth Burns. The guilty pleas stem from two separate instances of violence against Ms. Burns that took place in March 27, 2017 and April 4, 2017 at residences in Ladson, SC. After hearing the facts of the two charges, Circuit Court Judge Kristi Harrington sentenced the 42-year-old Holmes to 30 years in prison.

On April 4, 2017, the defendant instigated an altercation with the victim, accusing her of stealing his money in the early morning. The argument escalated and, as heard on the eyewitness homeowner's 9-1-1 call, the defendant grabbed a bottle of lighter fluid and a lighter and doused the victim as he screamed threats to kill her. The victim was lit on fire as she attempted to flee the residence. She was then tackled by the defendant, who continued the assault by trying to choke her. After the victim escaped, she cast her smoldering shirt into the yard and fled to the intersection of Royle Road, where she flagged down a Good Samaritan who transported her to Trident Hospital for treatment. The defendant managed to enter the Samaritan's vehicle and was heard on the Samaritan's 9-1-1 call feeding false information that he awoke to robbers lighting the

victim on fire and stating that he saved her life by tackling her and putting out the flames. The victim immediately reported to the Emergency Room staff that the defendant was the perpetrator of her injuries and he fled down an Interstate 26 on-ramp before being taken into custody by the Berkeley County Sheriff's Office. The victim sustained second and third degree burns to 30% of her body: on her arms, back and neck.

During the investigation by BCSO detectives, the victim reported that she had sought medical treatment at Trident on March 27, 2017 for a separate physical assault. She reported that the defendant similarly accused her on that day of stealing his money and drugs. When she could not provide the items to the defendant he struck her multiple times in the face with a closed fist and choked her until she lost consciousness. BCSO Detectives corroborated her story through medical records from Trident Hospital showing that the victim sustained multiple facial fractures to both the left and right orbital bones causing blackened eyes and herniated tissue on the same date.

After a thorough investigation, detectives were able to intercept jail mail sent by the defendant to the witnesses in the case offering gifts to convince them all to change their testimony to law enforcement so he could "have a fighting chance" at a light sentence. The State requested that the Judge impose the maximum 30-year sentence at the defendant's plea hearing, thwarting his attempts to manipulate the judicial system. The case was prosecuted by Assistant Solicitor Jordan Smith.

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