

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA



OFFICE OF THE COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY CITY OF PORTSMOUTH



MEDIA RELEASE

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Portsmouth, VA

Contact: Brandon T. Wroblewski
Senior Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney/Public Information Officer
wrobleskib@portsmouthva.gov · (757) 393-8581

DEFENDANT SENTENCED TO LIFE PLUS 13 YEARS FOR 2016 MURDER AND ROBBERY

PORTSMOUTH, VA – The court today affirmed a jury's verdict and sentenced 23-year-old Rufus Dillard III to life in prison plus 13 years for the 2016 murder of Terence Antonio Johnson. Dillard was sentenced to life on a charge of 1st degree murder, 3 years for using a firearm to commit 1st degree murder, 5 years for robbery, and 5 years for using a firearm to commit robbery.

The Commonwealth's evidence at trial proved that in the early morning hours of May 6, 2016, an eyewitness saw a confrontation between Dillard and Johnson. Johnson was Dillard's cousin and lifelong friend. Dillard confronted Johnson as he sat in his car in the Marsh Landing Apartments in Portsmouth. An argument ensued, and Dillard shot Johnson repeatedly. Johnson died from gunshot wounds to the chest and was not discovered until the next morning. Forensic technicians found that Johnson's pockets had been turned out and his cell phone was missing.

Dillard confessed to a fellow inmate at the Hampton Roads Regional Jail, bragging that he "burned up" the victim. A detective further testified that during questioning hours after the murder, Dillard was told his hands would be tested for gunshot residue. Upon hearing this, Dillard broke an ice bag he had been holding and washed his hands in the presence of a detective.

Chief Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Cedric Wiggins and Senior Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Brandon Wroblewski prosecuted this case.

"Our attorneys come to work every day to fight for justice, and this result demonstrates their commitment to our city. Our office is committed to reducing violent crime and making Portsmouth a safer place for all."

- Commonwealth's Attorney Stephanie N. Morales

Stephanie N. Morales, Commonwealth's Attorney
Portsmouth Judicial Center · 1345 Court Street, Suite 105
Portsmouth, Virginia 23704