



JOHN H. CRANFORD, JR.
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COWETA JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

JEP BENDINGER
CHIEF ADA

ROBERT MOORADIAN
CHIEF DEPUTY ADA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 14, 2023

MELVIN CORDERO BARKLEY SENTENCED TO 30 YEARS IN PRISON WITHOUT PAROLE FOR GUILTY PLEA TO VOLUNTARY MANSLAUGHTER, AGGRAVATED ASSAULT, AND OTHER CHARGES

On November 9, 2023, Melvin Cordero Barkley pled guilty to Voluntary Manslaughter, Aggravated Assault, and two counts of Possession of a Knife During the Commission of a Felony in relation to the stabbing death of Tyler Waters in May 2018. Pursuant to a plea agreement negotiated by the State, Superior Court Judge Erica Tisinger presided over the plea and sentenced the defendant to 30 years in prison without the possibility for parole followed by 20 years on probation. The State was able to negotiate a sentence without parole eligibility because the Defendant has multiple prior felony convictions. The case was specially set to begin trial on Monday, November 13, 2023.

Senior Assistant District Attorney Lara Todd and DA Investigator Becky Byrd prosecuted the case. Lt. Dan Keever of the Carrollton Police Department led the investigation. The evidence gathered in the investigation revealed the following:

On May 3, 2018, the events that led to the death of the victim, Tyler Waters, began when he and the Defendant got into an argument during a telephone call. Waters was upset that Barkley and Barkley's fiancé were living with Water's great-aunt and were not paying her rent. During the argument, Barkley invited Waters to come to the residence so they could discuss it. It is not clear if Barkley and Waters intended to talk or fight, but when Waters arrived at the residence, the two got into a physical fight in front of the residence. Waters essentially won the fight then got back into his vehicle and drove away. Barkley then got into his own vehicle with a knife and pursued Waters.

When Barkley caught up to Waters vehicle, Barkley struck the back of Waters vehicle. Waters stopped his car, exited, and approached Barkley's vehicle. The two then got into another physical fight during which Barkley stabbed Waters in the throat, severing his carotid artery and cutting his jugular vein. Waters was able to get back into his vehicle but died there. Law enforcement received several calls about the initial altercation and in responding to the scene found Waters unresponsive inside his vehicle in the road. Efforts to revive Waters were unsuccessful.

Barkley fled the scene before law enforcement arrived. He was not located until the following day, May 4, 2018. By the time Barkley was located, he had left his vehicle in Bremen, disposed of the knife, and washed the clothes he was wearing when he killed Waters. Barkley gave several recorded interviews to law enforcement in which he provided several evolving accounts of what occurred, including claiming he stabbed Waters in self-defense.

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While the District Attorney's Office believes the evidence supports the charge of Murder, the Office reached this negotiated resolution in contemplation of the possibility that a jury may not convict the Defendant of Murder. Resolving this case with 30 years in prison without the possibility of parole protects our community for decades from this Defendant and holds him accountable for taking the life of Mr. Waters without justification.

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