

NEWS RELEASE

R. Andrew Murray
District Attorney

June 21, 2012

Domestic Violence Team convicts five during trial week

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – The Domestic Violence Team for the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Office held a trial term in Courtroom 5170 for the week of June 11, 2012. The Superior Court Judge presiding was The Honorable Yvonne Mims Evans. Cases were also heard before The Honorable W. Robert Bell, Superior Court Judge, in courtroom 5370.

John Dash, 36, was charged with 1) assault on a female, 2) violation of a domestic violence protective order and 3) trespassing. The jury returned a verdict of *guilty* on the violation of a domestic violence protective order. Judge Bell dismissed the trespassing charge. Dash was sentenced by Judge Bell to 75 days in the county jail.

Maurice Shropshire, 27, was charged with 1) assault on a female, 2) sexual battery, 3) communicating threats and 4) damage to real property. The jury returned a verdict of *guilty* on the damage to real property charge and *not guilty* on the sexual battery and communicating threats charges. The jury was unable to reach a decision on the assault on a female charge. Shropshire was sentenced by Judge Evans to 45 days in the county jail.

Three defendants pled guilty before their cases were called for trial:

Coleitta Robichaw, 31, pled guilty to simple assault. Judge Bell sentenced Robichaw to 30 days in jail; that sentence was suspended pending her successful completion of 12 months of supervised probation.

Jason Flowers, 35, pled guilty to assault on a female. Flowers was sentenced by Judge Bell to 30 days in jail; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 12 months of supervised probation.

Antonio Harris, 52, pled guilty to assault on a female. Harris was sentenced by Judge Evans to 120 days in jail; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 12 months of supervised probation.

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Note: Misdemeanors and infractions are originally prosecuted in district court in North Carolina. In criminal district court, a judge determines guilt, not a jury; this is commonly referred to as a "bench trial." However, defendants have a right to appeal a conviction from the district court to the superior court for a trial de novo. The new trial in superior court must be a jury trial, not a bench trial. In a de novo trial, the jury cannot be informed that a district court judge previously found the defendant guilty;

further, a record of any evidence, including testimony, from district court may not be introduced. While the DA's Office prosecutes nearly 225,000 misdemeanors and infractions each year in district court in Mecklenburg County, each defendant is entitled to exercise his/her right to appeal to the superior court. When a misdemeanor or infraction occupies the limited time available in our superior courtrooms, it the intent of the DA's Office to keep the public informed of the results through news releases like this one. Due to the volume of misdemeanors and infractions prosecuted in district court each day, reports like this are not possible for all of those cases.

