

Contact:
Phone: (601) 968-6568
Fax: (601) 968-6655

Hinds Co. Courthouse
407 E. Pascagoula St.
P. O. Box 22747
Jackson, MS 39225-2747

**HINDS COUNTY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
ROBERT SHULER SMITH, D.A.**

PRESS RELEASE

Jackson Resident Willie Bernard found guilty of Murder

January 28, 2016

For Immediate Release

On January 28, 2016, Willie Bernard, age 32, was found guilty by a jury of his peers. Bernard was convicted of the murder of Larry Johnson resulting from a shooting which occurred in 2011, at the Arbor Parks Apartments, here in Jackson, MS.

On March 16, 2011, Larry Johnson used the entrance way to leave the Arbor Parks Apartments as Willie Bernard and his companion, Brittany Wells, were entering the apartment complex. Heated words were exchanged between the parties in both vehicles. Bernard shot the unarmed victim twice in the upper torso. Bernard attempted to flee the scene. Bernard was apprehended by the Jackson Police Department at a location not far from the shooting. The victim was provided CPR by residents of the apartments; he later died at a local hospital.

Willie Bernard was initially tried for the murder of Larry Johnson on May 28, 2013. The jury found him guilty of murder in that trial. However, the Honorable Judge Winston Kidd ordered a new trial based on a Supreme Court decision dealing with the castle law doctrine.

Judge Winston Kidd sentenced Willie Bernard to life in prison.

Hinds County District Attorney Robert Shuler Smith stated that, "This verdict is another step towards our efforts to remove violent offenders off the

streets of Hinds County. This tragedy was absolutely senseless and could have easily been avoided."