



Department of Justice

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Jury Convicts Man for Role in Armed Robbery of Sprint Store

RICHMOND, Va. – Last Friday, a federal jury in Richmond convicted Ronnell Kareem Levon Johnson, 27, of Norfolk, for his role in robbing a Sprint store in Colonial Heights in January 2019.

“As the evidence at trial demonstrated, the defendant and his co-conspirator participated in an armed robbery in which they restrained and terrorized the victims,” said Raj Parekh, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia. “Thanks to the investigative efforts of our law enforcement partners and the trial team’s unwavering pursuit of justice, the jury’s verdict holds the defendant accountable for threatening the safety of our community members.”

According to court records and evidence presented at trial, on the afternoon of January 7, 2019, Johnson and his co-conspirator, T.R., travelled from the Norfolk area to Colonial Heights to commit a violent armed robbery of a Sprint Store. During the robbery, T.R. brandished a loaded .40 caliber Ruger semi-automatic pistol and forced two employees into a back room of the store, where he let Johnson in through the back entrance.

Johnson entered the store and started gathering Sprint Store merchandise into a bag. The two robbers then held the two employees hostage in the back room, and attempted to tie up both employees while they completed the robbery. Due to a time-delay lock on the store’s safe, the robbers had to wait approximately twenty minutes for the safe to open. During that time, two separate customers entered the front of the store. T.R. let one of the employees go assist each customer, along with a warning that the employee would be killed if he tried to alert anyone about the crime. The employee did as he was told and the final customer left without incident. Minutes after the second customer departed, the time-delay lock on the safe opened, allowing Johnson and T.R. to steal dozens of cellular telephones and other store merchandise valued at approximately \$25,000.

The ensuing investigation first led to the identification of T.R. as a suspect, and investigators obtained a search warrant for his Norfolk residence in January 2019. During the search of T.R.’s residence, officers recovered the loaded .40 caliber Ruger semi-automatic pistol used in the robbery, various stolen Sprint Store items, and other evidence. T.R. later pleaded guilty for his role in the armed robbery, as well as additional charges. Using toll records and cellular tower data, law enforcement later identified Johnson as T.R.’s co-conspirator in the armed robbery based on Johnson’s travel to and from the Colonial Heights Sprint Store on January 7, 2019, along with other evidence.

The jury convicted Johnson on one count of robbery affecting commerce. Johnson faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison when sentenced on August 13. Actual sentences for federal crimes are

typically less than the maximum penalties. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after taking into account the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Raj Parekh, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia; Charlie J. Patterson, Special Agent in Charge of the ATF's Washington Field Division; Colonel Gary T. Settle, Superintendent of Virginia State Police; and Colonel Jeffrey W. Faries, Chief of Colonial Heights Police, made the announcement after Senior U.S. District Judge Robert E. Payne accepted the verdict. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kenneth R. Simon, Jr. and Michael Gill are prosecuting the case.

This case is being prosecuted as part of the joint federal, state, and local Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Program, the centerpiece of the Department of Justice's violent crime reduction efforts. PSN is an evidence-based program proven to be effective at reducing violent crime. Through PSN, a broad spectrum of stakeholders work together to identify the most pressing violent crime problems in the community and develop comprehensive solutions to address them. As part of this strategy, PSN focuses enforcement efforts on the most violent offenders and partners with locally based prevention and reentry programs for lasting reductions in crime.

A copy of this press release is located on the website of the [U.S. Attorney's Office](#) for the Eastern District of Virginia. Related court documents and information are located on the website of the [District Court](#) for the Eastern District of Virginia or on [PACER](#) by searching for Case No. 3:20-cr-133.

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