

# Life in prison for taxi driver murder

By **ZACH MCKNIGHT**  
*Star-Tribune Staff Writer*

A man convicted of the murder of a Danville taxi driver was sentenced to life in prison by Danville Circuit Court Judge James Reynolds.

James Edward Fultz IV was convicted of first-degree murder and robbery

when he stabbed cab driver Wendy Harris to death on Gay St. in Danville in Jan. 2021.

Fultz's attorney Eric Cronin asked for a lower sentence by stating Fultz had a tough upbringing being around drugs and other factors and having a known mental health diagnosis.

"He did testify and still maintains innocence," Cronin started. "He had a tough upbringing with drugs but still managed to have four children and was able to maintain employment. He did say he did relapse and intends to address it in incarceration. He repents and expressed remorse for what happened

to the victim. He values God and has maintained a connection. I hope the court considers a low end sentence and shows mercy for Mr. Fultz."

Commonwealth Attorney Michael Newman disagreed using the word value against Fultz.

"The defendant showed  
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**Fultz**

# Murder

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no value in Wendy Harris's life. She was a mother of two, had siblings and was a writer. She completed three books, but because of the defendant's actions, she never finished her fourth. All because he valued what he needed, what he wanted. Repent is to show sincere remorse. He's the same man that said, "I killed someone tonight." Now he wants mercy?"

Newman told the court the only number that matters is the number of times Harris was stabbed, with three wounds going seven inches deep, the same length of the knife blade that was used.

"This court needs to show the same mercy he showed Wendy Harris," said Newman.

Before the sentence was read, Fultz spoke to the court, reiterating his innocence on what happened that night.

"I know what I did, and what I didn't do. I am not a murderer," he said.

After all the documentation was presented, Reynolds gave remarks on Fultz's history.

"The jury heard a compelling case. There was plenty of evidence, and the physical evidence supports it. Your criminal history is terrible, not being able to maintain criminal free for a serious length of time with six prior parole violations."

For the charge of first-degree murder, Reynolds sentenced Fultz to life, and for the robbery charge, 10 years.

# 40+ years in prison for Fair murder

By **ZACH MCKNIGHT**  
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In a very emotional courtroom Wednesday morning, Pittsylvania County Circuit Court Judge Stacey Moreau sentenced Tito Nathaniel Cobbs of Danville to more than 40 years in prison.

This was all from a shooting incident that took place at the Danville-Pittsylvania County Fairgrounds on Sept. 18, 2021, resulting in the death of Joshua Rone

of Yanceyville. The shooting was the result of a fight over a girl.

Rone played football for Bartlett Yancey High School and was in the 11th grade when he was killed.

Michael A. Nicholas represented Cobbs and Alexis Johnson and Bryan Haskins represented the Commonwealth.

Right away, there were emotional scenes as Micah Rone, Joshua's brother, was called up for victim impact

statements. He described his brother as being very energetic and said both of them went to the fair together. Micah said the moment Joshua was shot, he didn't hear the gunshot but did see people running. Only after not having his brother come back to him did he know something was wrong.

Joshua's older sister, Kayla Rone, described the incident as "unreal that would happen to him."

Christina Gomez, Joshua's mother, was in tears before coming to the stand. She said Joshua was her youngest son, and she knew Micah and Joshua were going to the fair that night. She was told Joshua was shot later that night, and she said she screamed as loudly as she could. She and Joshua's father drove to the hospital and were waiting in the waiting room

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**Joshua Rone was murdered at the Pittsylvania County Fair.**



# Prison

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when the doctors told them he didn't make it.

Haskins asked Gomez to describe her son, and through her tears she said, "I couldn't have asked for a better son. He was so loving and caring. This has broken the community as well. I can't go into a grocery store without someone telling me, 'I'm sorry for your loss.'"

Gomez commented Joshua was so excited to graduate.

Nicholas called Derrek Bland, Cobbs' cousin. While speaking, he turned to Cobbs.

"I want to let him know a debt will be paid. Reintegration into society will be difficult, but I and your family will be there when that happens."

Johnson started closing arguments pointing back to why Joshua was there to begin with and called the situation "not need to happen."

"He (Joshua) and his brother wanted to hang out and have a good time," she began. "The night before the murder, the defendant was told by probation he was past curfew. This did not need to happen. He was told he was not supposed to have a firearm, that's how he got on probation. This family is having to pay a burden not having their son go on and see what he wanted to do."

Nicholas argued back with when Cobbs was at trial, he acknowledged responsibility.

"To say this is a tragedy would be a massive understatement. We are asking the court to sentence Cobbs to freedom. He made a terrible choice."

Haskins countered with a difference in accepting responsibility and reality.

"We knew he was involved in a crime," he said. "The defendant ran with the crowd and thought he could get away. Truth never needs to be proven. He tried to sell a different truth multiple times to authorities. What this defendant knew was he was at the fair and violating his probation. He was there. His history at school was suspensions and fighting. That was his tool. The victim's family knew someone somewhere was going to give him an education. This defendant pointed the gun, shot him in the back and ran away."

"This is a willful and deliberate murder. His buddies wanted a piece of Josh's friend whom Josh and his friends were arguing with some of the defendant's friends over a girl. He thought, 'This is about my guy.' He's sorry he got caught and is going to jail. What he needs to understand is Josh's dreams have been extinguished because

he pulled the trigger. He's caused the family suffering. He's dead because he brought a gun to the fair and wasn't supposed to. The pain is raw."

Cobbs gave a statement designed to accept responsibility for his actions, and described how he didn't mean for any of this to happen.

Moreau condemned Cobb's actions prior to and on the night of the murder, calling it perplexing.

"You shot a young man in the back. Why you have a gun in the first place is perplexing," she said. "You continue with the behavior of, 'I don't care what anyone says.' You chose to turn and lead the second fight with a gun. It's perplexing. You can't tell the truth and can't stay away from guns."

The Commonwealth pointed to the victim's potential. I don't see any potential that's been demonstrated from you. You can't even listen to your probation officer. When an individual at 16 demonstrates no regard for anyone around him, that's selfish behavior. You don't listen to anyone."

Moreau gave the sentence of 70 years and suspend 30 for first-degree murder and the minimum of three years for the weapons charge.

Haskins gave a quick comment after the sentence.

"The Sheriff's Office did an excellent job, and we're glad some justice has finally been brought to this family. It's been a long way to get here."



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# Dry Fork man found guilty of several crimes

By ZACH MCKNIGHT  
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In a bench trial Monday, Pittsylvania County Circuit Court Judge Stacey Moreau found Timothy Wayne Jones of Dry Fork guilty from an incident that occurred on July 25, 2021.

The charges were malicious shooting in an occupied building, brandishing a firearm, property damage and statutory burglary.

Joseph Sanzone represented Jones and Michael Maunder represented the Commonwealth.

Jones entered a not guilty plea on all charges before the trial.

Pamela Holder was the first witness to be called by Maunder, and she testified she had known Jones because they used to date for a while until July 2021. She said Jones had been drinking and got belligerent, punched through the side door of her house and eventually put a gun to her head. Jones, according to Holder, owned the gun in question.

She said she locked herself in the bathroom and when she came back out, Jones was already gone. It was said she was drinking as well.

Sanzone questioned Holder on whether she hit Jones, and she said no. She did say she had to fix her door after the fact, which was about \$700.

Deputy Scott Eanes of the Pittsylvania County Sheriff's Office testified he was dispatched to a possible shooting. When he got there, Eanes saw the side door had a hole about the size of a fist. Upon further inspection, Eanes said he saw a hole in the bedroom wall and not too far away was the shell casing of a .45 caliber round.

The hole in question was said to have been under the bedroom window. Eanes said when he saw Holder, he could tell she was drinking because of the odor of alcohol and having encounters with a lot of intoxicated people. Eanes said he could not tell if

there were men's clothes in the residence.

Eanes also said Holder had very little slurred speech and could understand what was being asked to her at the time.

Sanzone made a motion to strike but was denied by Moreau.

Jones himself testified next, and he claims he was at Holder's residence for about two months. While he did not pay rent, he said he was working by doing lawn care, and claims he maintained the property all summer and had almost all of his belongings there with the exception of a couple of items. He had another property he was paying rent at the time as well.

Jones said he and Holder had been out to eat and came back to her place. He also said they both had been drinking that night and said she started screaming and eventually hit him. He also said she left the house, and with no idea where she went, he started smoking a cigarette waiting.

Jones said when Holder came back, she had locked him out of the house and testified all he wanted was to get his keys, phone, wallet, etc.

Jones said a round discharged when he grabbed his gun but claims he did not point it at her head.

Sanzone called Holder back up, and she said Jones did not live at the house. She also said she did not slap him.

Jones went back up and said "she doesn't remember much when she slapped me to the gun going off."

Before closing arguments, Sanzone again made a motion to strike but was again denied.

In closing, Sanzone pointed to where Jones was at the time of the incident.

"It occurred on the property, and he never left it," Sanzone started. "He had every possession still on the property. It was never his intention to fire the gun. This court would like to know what

happened from midnight to 6 a.m."

Maunder countered to Jones getting locked out and his actions after.

"Permission for entry does not include all parcels," started Maunder. "He got locked out which means he's not allowed in this property anymore. He entered into the house as he said, 'I flipped into a rage and punched through the door.' The first thing he does is take a shot in her presence and point the gun at her head. That counts as felonious intent. The defendant has acknowledged he had a significant amount of alcohol."

Moreau acknowledged alcohol got in the way that night and wrapped it all up by stating, "It is not your home," before finding Jones guilty.

Sentencing is tentatively scheduled for Friday April 15 at 1:15 p.m.