



Riverside County District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

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TWO CONVICTED IN MURDER OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS MAN

INDIO – Today, July 29, 2010, a Riverside County jury convicted Lavinski Shamone Harrell and Latoya Jenkins in the murder of Samuel Cotton at his Desert Hot Springs home in February 2009.

The defendants, Harrell (DOB: 02/25/82) and Jenkins (DOB: 01/22/86) were each convicted of one count of murder with two special circumstances: committing the murder during an attempted burglary and attempted robbery.

A third defendant also charged in the murder, Curtis Lee Drake (DOB: 04/04/89) will face trial pending the results of a competency hearing on August 17, 2010.

On Feb. 23, 2009, Jenkins knocked at the front door of Cotton's home and said she wanted to buy marijuana. When the door was opened she entered the home and, shortly thereafter, Drake and Harrell entered armed with guns. Samuel Cotton was shot as they ordered him to get on the ground. He died as a result the gunshot wound. The defendants fled and were arrested after an investigation by the Desert Hot Springs Police Department.

The case, INF064867, is being prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Manny Bustamante. All three defendants are facing life in prison without the possibility of parole. Harrell and Jenkins are scheduled to be sentenced on September 17, 2010, in Dept. 3P of the Larson Justice Center.

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