

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA



OFFICE OF THE COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY CITY OF PORTSMOUTH



MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – November 1, 2023

JOHNNY RODRIGUEZ CONVICTED OF FIRST DEGREE MURDER

PORTSMOUTH, VA- In the matter of Commonwealth v. Johnny Rodriguez, the jury has found the Defendant guilty of First Degree Murder, Use of a Firearm in Commission of a Murder and two counts of Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor, in the killing of 35-year-old Lawrence Cowfer on February 19, 2022.

The two-day jury trial concluded on November 1, 2023.

Evidence presented by the Commonwealth during the trial showed that Cowfer and Rodriguez were neighbors and became involved in an argument around 2:00am at Cowfer's home. During the course of the argument, Rodriguez fired a single gunshot at pointblank range that struck Cowfer in the face. Cowfer was pronounced deceased at the scene minutes later by medics. There were six children inside the home at the time of the shooting.

Rodriguez faces life in prison and is scheduled to be sentenced on January 5, 2024.

This matter was prosecuted by Chief Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Joyce Weddle.

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