

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Thomas Attorney Shot Dead By Man He Gave Ride, Perpetrator Convicted

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ST. THOMAS -- Acting Attorney General James S. Carroll III announced via press release this afternoon the conviction of Auriel Devon Frett on several felony charges, including murder in the first degree, assault in the first degree and kidnapping for robbery.

On October 26, 2008, Frett and his accomplice caught a ride with Attorney Gabriel Lerner at the Cassi Hill intersection and told Lerner that they were on their way to Red Hook. However, while dropping the men to their destination, Lerner, who was on his way to a bible study session at Lindquist beach, was robbed at gunpoint by Frett and forced into the trunk of his own car.

Frett then drove Lerner to Bordeaux and took him down an abandoned dirt trail and shot him to death. At the time of his homicide, Attorney Lerner worked for Judge Brenda J. Hollar as a law clerk. When Judge Hollar realized that Lerner had not reported to work in two days, and that he had not called in, she, along with Superior Court marshals, went to look for Lerner. Unable to find him, Judge Hollar filed a missing person's report with the police department.

Police Chief Rodney Querrard immediately issued an all points bulletin on Lerner's vehicle which was subsequently found by police two days later in a high-speed chase that ended in Scott Free and ultimately led to the arrest of Frett and his accomplice.

Frett had been previously convicted in March 2011 of the same charges. However, he appealed his conviction and the Virgin Islands Supreme Court overturned the ruling and remanded it back to the Superior Court for a new trial.

Frett's new trial commenced on Monday, June 8 before Judge Harold W.L. Willocks, and it lasted three days. The jury recessed for four hours before they returned with a verdict convicting Frett of all three counts in a second amended information.

Sentencing is set for September 8, 2015.

The case was prosecuted by the Chief of the Criminal Division Renée Gumbs Carty, Esq. and Assistant Attorney General Brenda C. Scales. Detective Jason Marsh of the Virgin Islands Police Department was the lead investigator in this case.