



**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
COUNTY OF SOLANO**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

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Release Date: March 18, 2021

Re: People v. Merlin Sylvester Jones

On March 17, 2021, after a five week jury trial in Department 11 of the Solano County Superior Court, before the Honorable Judge William J. Pendergast III, the jury convicted Defendant Merlin Sylvester Jones of First Degree Murder (Penal Code Section 187(a)) for the killing of Maleek Mitchell, being a Felon in Possession of a Firearm in violation of Penal Code Section 29800(a)(1), and for Personally Using a Firearm in the murder of Maleek Mitchell. The jury further found the defendant suffered a prior “strike” conviction.



On March 31, 2017, at approximately 11:09 p.m., officers responded to the area of Pennsylvania and Marin in Vallejo for a report of shots fired and a subject down in the middle of the street. Later, video surveillance showed a white Volvo coming down the street with the body of the victim falling out of it. The victim, identified as Maleek Mitchell, had been shot in the back and was tossed from the car. Officers attempted to revive him but were not successful. Maleek Mitchell’s friends indicated that he had gotten into the white Volvo to meet up with the driver, whom they did not know. Within a minute of getting in this car, Maleek Mitchell was dead and his wallet and money were gone.

Officers were able to connect Merlin Sylvester Jones to the crime through his phone which was seized by the Santa Clara Police Department (SCPD). SCPD had been working a case that had occurred a few hours before Mitchell was killed. Officers in Santa Clara were able to track down the defendant and arrest him. They obtained a search warrant for the defendant’s phone and worked with the Vallejo Police Department in helping solve the case. The defendant had incriminating content on his phone showing that he arranged to meet up with Maleek Mitchell shortly before he was killed. Additionally, the defendant’s phone had photographs and video of the murder weapon. Ballistics demonstrated that bullets taken from Maleek Mitchell’s body matched the weapon located in the photographs.

Defendant Jones is scheduled to be sentenced on May 20, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. in Department 11 of the Solano County Superior Court.

The case was prosecuted by Senior Deputy District Attorney Julie Underwood. Victim Witness Advocate Susanne Perthes provided victim advocacy.