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# NEWS

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## **NEW ORLEANS MURDERER SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT IN FEDERAL COURT**

**NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA** - Jim Letten, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana; David G. Harper, Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); and Warren Riley, Superintendent, New Orleans Police Department, announced today **BRYAN NELSON**, 22 years old, of New Orleans, was sentenced today to life imprisonment for the carjacking and murder of Christopher Briede. **NELSON** had pled guilty on August 24, 2006, before United States District Court Judge Carl J. Barbier of the Eastern District of Louisiana.

**NELSON**, who originally faced a maximum sentence of death in this case, which was sought by prosecutors, claimed that he was mentally retarded and therefore ineligible to receive a

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sentence of death in accordance with the United States Supreme Court's ruling in *Atkins v. Virginia*, 536 U.S. 304, 122 S.Ct. 2242 (2002), in which the Court ruled that those who are mentally retarded may not be executed. The Court, after pretrial hearings, ruled that **NELSON** was mentally retarded. Therefore, the maximum penalty which **NELSON** could have received in this matter was life imprisonment.

On September 27, 2002, Christopher Briede, age 32, and his wife Amy were leaving their house on Lepage St. in New Orleans around 8:15 in the morning. As they went to their 2002 Hyundai in the driveway, a red car pulled in behind them, blocking their car. Two persons, **BRYAN NELSON** and Darryl Franklin, got out of the car and began asking for directions. Franklin was holding a shotgun as they ordered the Briede's out of their car. Franklin told Amy Briede to throw her purse in the car and give him the keys. They went into the Briede's house and began taking numerous items and robbed Chris of his wallet. The defendants had Chris assist them in unplugging numerous electronic items from the armoire, and continually asked the Briedes "where the money was." Amy explained they didn't keep any in the house, and then indicated that they had an ATM card and that she could take them to get money.

Franklin stayed with Christopher Briede while **NELSON** took Amy, in the Briede's car, to the ATM. **NELSON** withdrew \$300 and tried to get more but was unsuccessful due to the bank's limit on withdrawals. They then returned to the Briede's residence.

Christopher Briede was still unhooking the electronics from the armoire when they returned. The defendants then began going through the house looking for other items. During this time a third person, later identified as Damon Dawson, was in and out of the house during the robbery, helping to remove items during the incident. Amy and Christopher Briede were then ordered to go into the bathroom, lock the door, and not call the police. After a few minutes, Franklin and **NELSON** forced the door open, ordered them out of the bathroom, and to lie down on the floor. Amy refused and began screaming to Christopher not to do it because they were

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going to kill them. Christopher told her to just lay down but she refused. **NELSON** then told Franklin to “go ahead” thus instructing his co-defendant Franklin to kill Christopher Briede. Franklin refused and gave the gun to **NELSON**. At that point, **NELSON** took the shotgun and shot Christopher Briede one time in the neck, killing him. **NELSON** then turned the gun towards Amy, and pulled the trigger; however the gun jammed. Both **NELSON** and Franklin then fled the house and took the Briede’s 2002 Hyundai.

Later that evening, **NELSON** was seen by other witnesses who saw him drive the Briede’s Hyundai into a telephone pole in the 1700 block of France Street in New Orleans. These witnesses identified **NELSON** in photographic lineups. **NELSON** was arrested after he was identified by Amy Briede as person who shot and killed her husband.

**NELSON** provided a statement at the time of his arrest, in which he admitted to participating in the carjacking and robbery, claiming he did so because Franklin forced him. At that time, **NELSON** denied shooting Christopher Briede. However, at his plea, **NELSON** admitted that he did in fact shoot and kill Christopher Briede and took the Briede’s car.

Specifically, **NELSON** was originally charged via federal grand jury indictment along with his two defendants as follows:

Count 1: Conspiracy to use a firearm to commit a carjacking - **NELSON**, Franklin and Dawson.

Counts 2 and 3: Carjacking (unrelated case), and Brandishing a firearm during a crime of violence - **NELSON** and Franklin.

Counts 4 and 5: Carjacking (unrelated case), and Brandishing a firearm during a crime of violence - **NELSON** and Franklin.

Counts 6 and 7: Attempted carjacking (unrelated case), and Discharge of a firearm during a crime of violence - **NELSON** and Franklin.

Counts 8 and 9: Carjacking (unrelated case), and Brandishing a firearm during a crime of violence - **NELSON** and Franklin.

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Counts 10 and 11: Carjacking resulting in the death of Christopher Briede and Discharge of a weapon during a crime of violence resulting in the death of Christopher Briede - **NELSON**, Franklin and Dawson.

In his guilty plea, **NELSON** pled guilty as charged to Count 1, and Counts 10 and 11, charging him with the two counts in which he murdered Christopher Briede. Upon the tender of **NELSON**'s plea of guilty to the federal carjacking - murder charges, the United States indicated its intention to dismissed against **NELSON** the remaining unrelated carjacking charges, which had no effect on **NELSON**'s maximum sentence, that being life imprisonment.

Previously, on March 20, 2003, Damon Dawson pled guilty pursuant to a plea agreement, charging him with conspiring to use firearms during and in relation to a crime of violence, arising from his involvement in the carjacking and robbery of Amy Briede and her husband Christopher Briede who was shot and killed by co-defendant **BRYAN NELSON** during this carjacking incident. Dawson's plea is reflective of the fact that he was not directly involved in the shooting in this case. The plea agreement requires that he serve a twenty year sentence of imprisonment.

Thereafter, and prior to **NELSON**'s plea and sentencing, on March 24, 2003, co-defendant Darryl Franklin pled guilty to the carjacking which occurred on September 20, 2002 which resulted in the murder of Christopher Briede. Franklin pled guilty on that same date to three additional counts of carjacking and one count of attempted carjacking that had previously occurred on March 11, 2002.

On June 25, 2003, Dawson was sentenced to serve a twenty-year prison sentence. Franklin was sentenced to federal life imprisonment for the carjacking and death of Christopher Briede (Count 10 of the indictment). Relative to the other carjackings, Franklin was sentenced to fifteen years on Counts 2, 4, 6, and 8 to run concurrently with one another.

Commenting on today's life sentence of **BRYAN NELSON** for the federal murder of Christopher Briede, United States Attorney Jim Letten made the following statement:

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The imposition this morning of a federal life sentence to be served by **BRYAN NELSON** for conspiracy, carjacking and firearms-related federal murder charges for the brutal and cold-blooded murder of Christopher Briede signals the end of the long and arduous efforts by the United States to achieve justice in this tragic and vicious crime. The conviction and life sentence imposed upon **NELSON** for the cold blooded, calculated, and unprovoked murder of Christopher Briede, coupled with his attempted murder of Christopher's surviving wife, Amy, is the best possible resolution available in this case, considering that **NELSON** received the maximum penalty possible under the circumstances.

The dismissal of the remaining, unrelated charges against **NELSON** for other significantly lesser offenses, in no way impacted or affected the maximum sentence which **NELSON** faced and ultimately received today. Moreover, while it was the articulated intention of the United States to seek the death penalty against **NELSON**, circumstances beyond the control of the United States resulted in the unavailability of that penalty due to a finding that he is, under the law, mentally retarded.

While no resolution or justice, however harsh, can undo the tragedy caused by the cold and calculated murder perpetrated by **NELSON**, this successful prosecution is nevertheless a compelling testament to the dedication, commitment, and professionalism of the New Orleans Police Department, Special Agents of the Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the fine veteran prosecutors in my office who brought this matter to a successful conclusion, complete with the long-term imprisonment of **NELSON** and his co-defendants, and their separation from society.

It is my fervent hope that cases such as this help to serve as a warning and deterrent to those ruthless thugs among us who are intent in preying on members of our society, that crimes such as these come with a significant price to pay.

This matter was investigated by Detectives of the New Orleans Police Department Homicide Division and Special Agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and

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Explosives. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Greg Kennedy and Duane Evans.

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