

Guilty Verdicts for Mastermind of Paladin Club Murders

A New Castle County Superior Court jury returned guilty verdicts on all charges against Christopher Rivers, 33, of Wilmington, for the 2013 killing of his business partner Joseph Connell, and Connell's wife, Olga, both 39, of Wilmington. The jury found Rivers guilty of two counts of Murder First Degree, two counts of Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony, Conspiracy First Degree, and Criminal Solicitation First Degree.

Rivers's co-defendant, Dominique Benson, 25, of Wilmington, was convicted of Conspiracy First Degree, but jurors could not reach a verdict on the charges of Murder and Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony. The State will retry Benson on those charges.

Joseph and Olga Connell were killed outside of their home on Paladin Drive in Wilmington. Rivers planned the murders in order to collect on an insurance policy that he and Joseph Connell took on each other in order to protect their business. The state believes Benson was hired as one of the gunmen.

"We are gratified that this jury found Christopher Rivers responsible for the heinous murders of Joseph and Olga Connell, and hope the verdict brings some measure of closure to their family members," said State Prosecutor Kathleen Jennings. "We're also grateful the jury found that Dominique Benson conspired with Mr. Rivers to commit these murders, and we will most certainly retry him on the remaining counts. I want to thank the prosecution team of Deputy Attorneys General Colleen Norris, Karin Volker, and Jenna Milecki as well as Kim Moro and Evelyn Smith, who prosecuted the case, and the New

Castle County Police Department for their fine investigative work in this case, led by Detective James Leonard.”