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Press Release

Rhode Island man guilty in murder of Avon dad

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Willie Wilkerson, age 29, of Lincoln, Rhode Island has been found guilty of murder in the first degree in the September 2011 shooting of Kristopher Rosa in Avon, according to Norfolk District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey.

Wilkerson shot Kristopher Rosa to death on September 19, 2011 in the context of a car chase on Central Street in Avon; Rosa's girlfriend was a passenger in the car. After several bullets were fired into the car and the assailants left the area, the girlfriend attempted to save Rosa's life by driving him to the Good Samaritan Medical Center in nearby Brockton, Mass. He was pronounced dead at the hospital.

The trial began June 8, 2015. The jury began its deliberations Friday afternoon, June 19, 2015. Defense attorney was Matthew Feinberg. First Assistant District Attorney Lynn Beland and Assistant District Attorney Carolyn Hely represented the Commonwealth. The jury returned its verdict early Tuesday afternoon, June 23, 2015.

"Mr. Rosa was only 23 and left a young son, just a few months old, when he was murdered," District Attorney Morrissey said. "Our thoughts are with that young son and the entire Rosa family."

Morrissey also thanked the State Police and Avon Police involved in the extensive investigation that led to Wilkerson's indictment in 2013. "Lynn Beland and Carolyn Hely did very strong work presenting a complicated case to the jury. We thank this jury for their diligence and their work."

The charge carries a mandatory sentence of life in prison without possibility of parole. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled for next week, but has not yet been fixed.