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**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Commonwealth v. Marquette Treyvon Lee
23 Years to Serve for Senseless Killing of Ph. D. Student**

Virginia Beach, Va. – Colin D. Stolle, Commonwealth's Attorney for the city of Virginia Beach, announced that Marquette Lee, age 26, formerly of the 6500 block of Ball Avenue in Norfolk, Virginia, was sentenced today for Second Degree Murder, Shooting from an Occupied Vehicle, Use of a Firearm, and Possession of a Firearm by a Felon. Circuit Court Judge Stephen C. Mahan sentenced Lee to 53 years in prison with thirty (30) years suspended, leaving 23 years to serve.

Lee pled guilty on October 26, 2021. If this matter had gone to trial, the Commonwealth's evidence would have proven that on the evening of February 19, 2019, the victim, Damen Graham Jr., lived with his father at the Chartwell Drive apartment complex in Virginia Beach. He was taking a leave from his Ph.D. program due to stress and other factors.

Vanessa Johnson lived in the same complex. On this evening, she and co-defendant Charles Wilson were in separate vehicles when Graham approached Johnson's vehicle. Wilson told her not to be afraid of Graham then told Graham to walk away. A brief argument transpired between Wilson and Graham, then Wilson and Johnson left together in a vehicle to go to 7-Eleven. When they returned, Graham was no longer in the parking lot. Johnson briefly went into her apartment and when she returned, Marquette Lee, who was a friend of Wilson, was in the rear driver's side seat of Wilson's vehicle. Johnson sat in the driver's seat with Wilson in the front passenger seat.

As Johnson began to drive off, Graham approached the vehicle saying, "It's you! It's you!" and attempted to open the passenger front door. Lee rolled down the window and told Graham to back up. As Johnson continued to drive, Lee fired three shots, paused briefly, then fired a fourth shot. A nearby doorbell camera recorded the audio of the shots. A neighbor heard commotion in the

parking lot and observed a hand, with what appeared to be a gun in it, reaching out of the vehicle in the seat Lee occupied. He saw and heard the shots being fired and noted that the fourth shot pointed directly toward Graham. Graham was struck in the head and pronounced deceased at the scene by responding police officers.

Police identified Wilson and Johnson as potential suspects and conducted interviews with them. They both initially lied to police, but Johnson later returned to make an honest statement. Detectives were then able to identify Lee as the shooter. When Lee was interviewed by police, he also initially lied. Eventually he confessed to his involvement in the shooting and acknowledged he did not see any weapons on Graham.

For their roles in the crimes, Wilson and Johnson pled guilty to Obstructing Justice and are scheduled for sentencing on March 1 and 2, 2022, respectively.

Lee was previously convicted of a violent felony.

Assistant Commonwealth's Attorneys S. Mario Lorello and Brian P. Boyle prosecuted this case. Please contact Macie Allen if additional information is desired.

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