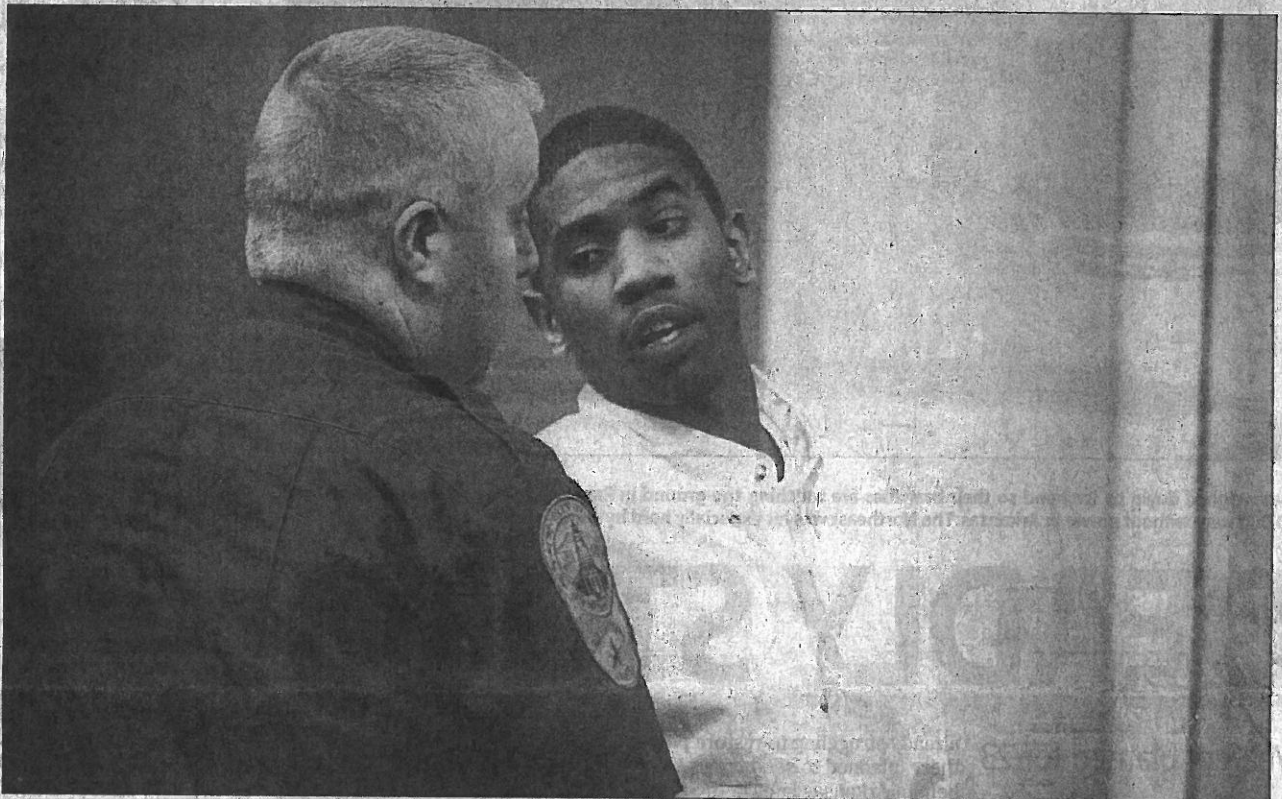


# Teen guilty in shooting



PHOTOS BY JILL NANCE/THE NEWS & ADVANCE

Shandre Saunders, 17, was escorted out of Lynchburg Circuit Court on Wednesday afternoon after his sentencing for aggravated malicious wounding, use of a firearm in commission of a felony and participating in a criminal street gang.

## Jury's recommendation sends courtroom into a frenzy

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Lynchburg Circuit Court erupted into a ruckus Wednesday afternoon as a 17-year-old gang member convicted of shooting a cab driver in 2007 received a 53-year sentence recommendation from the jury.

Shandre Saunders was slammed chin-first into the corner of the courtroom by Lynchburg sheriff's deputies as he struggled with them near the door from the courtroom to the holding cell.

Friends and family members who then stood up, shouted and banged on seats were escorted from the room by extra security brought in for the hearing.

The jury found Saunders guilty earlier Wednesday of aggravated malicious wounding, use of a firearm in commission of a felony and participation in a criminal street gang.

The jury recommended a sentence of 40



Allied Cab driver Greg Powell was shot by Shandre Saunders in 2007 and is partially paralyzed.

years on the wounding charge, three years for the firearms charge and 10 years for the gangs charge.

"At a time when we just had a shooting at the public library, the economy is going south, gang violence seemingly on the rise — a tough, harsh sentence like this sends a message to the community that we're not

going to tolerate this," Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Chuck Felmlee said.

The gang conviction and sentence recommendation at the top of the 10-year sentencing range was particularly significant, the prosecutor said.

"To my knowledge here in Lynchburg, we've never maxed anyone out on a gangs charge," he said.

A judge has the final authority on sentencing; a hearing is scheduled for March 13.

Felmlee told the jurors that on Sept. 7, 2007, Allied Cab driver Greg Powell was shot in the head by Saunders as Powell drove his cab down 12th Street near the intersection with Garfield Avenue. The bullet was intended for rival gang members in the Sunoco parking lot across the street.

Witness Alonzo Clark, the man initially charged with the shooting, testified Monday that he was standing in the middle

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