

State of South Carolina Eleventh Judicial Circuit

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Richland County Man Sentenced to 15 Years for Throwing Bodily Fluids on Correctional Officer

On September 15, 2025, Donald Harper, Jr., a 35-year-old man from Richland County, pleaded guilty to throwing bodily fluids on a Correctional Officer. The Honorable David P. Caraker, Jr. sentenced Harper to fifteen (15) years in prison, which is the maximum sentence allowed for this offense.

In 2015, Harper shot and killed a Benedict College instructor in Columbia, South Carolina. For that crime, he was sentenced to twenty-four (24) years in prison. In early 2025, Harper was serving his sentence at McCormick Correctional Institution, a state prison located in McCormick County, South Carolina.

On the evening of January 11, 2025, a Correctional Officer was delivering meals to inmates inside Harper's dormitory. As the Officer handed Harper his dinner, Harper threw a cup containing diarrhea directly into the Officer's face. The fecal matter struck the Officer in the eyes and mouth. As a result of the assault, the Officer required immediate medical treatment and continued monitoring for potential infectious diseases.

During sentencing, Assistant Solicitor Doug Fender asked the Judge for the maximum penalty, citing Harper's lengthy criminal history in Richland County as well as his extensive disciplinary record while incarcerated with the South Carolina Department of Corrections. Harper's criminal record in Richland County includes Breach of Peace (2008), Burglary, Second Degree (2008), Voluntary Manslaughter (2019), Pointing and Presenting a Firearm (2019), and Armed Robbery (2019).

Harper's misconduct inside McCormick Correctional Institute was investigated by Special Agent Daniel Cotter of the South Carolina Office of Inspector General. Prior to this week's guilty plea, Harper was projected to be released from prison in 2036. However, Judge Caraker, ordered that Harper's sentence for throwing bodily fluids be served consecutively, meaning it will not run at the same time as his previous sentence. The new fifteen (15) year sentence will instead begin only after he finishes his current prison term.

"This sends the message to all inmates who think they can assault our officers that South Carolina will not tolerate this kind of behavior," SCDC Director Joel Anderson said. "I thank the solicitor's office for prosecuting this case and the judge for the stiff sentence."