

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Cherokee County Man Threatens Police Officers With a Bow and Arrow,
Sentenced to 10 Years with 5 Years to Serve for Aggravated Assault on a Peace Officer
State vs. Joel Lee Bearden**

August 22, 2019 – District Attorney Shannon Wallace announces that a Cherokee County jury has convicted Joel Lee Bearden, 49, for a September 2017 assault on law enforcement officers. The jury deliberated for less than an hour yesterday afternoon before finding Bearden guilty of aggravated assault on a peace officer.

The incident began when the Cherokee Sheriff's Office responded to a 911 call regarding a domestic dispute on Trickum Road. The two inhabitants of the home did not initially respond to the officers' knocks or shouts of "Sheriff's Office!"

Upon making entrance into an open door leading from the garage into the home, one of the officers found himself facing the sharp end of an arrow that was aimed and ready to shoot. The officer was forced to retreat for his own safety and was then chased by a large, aggressive dog that Bearden kept on his property.

Eventually, Bearden came out onto the porch brandishing the bow and arrow in a firing position, which he pointed at the police officers in his yard. Typically used for deer hunting, the weapon would be lethal if an arrow were to penetrate the chest of an officer. After repeated demands to "put the bow down" and "drop your weapon," Bearden finally complied.

"These police officers were simply responding to a 911 call that suggested a woman may be in danger. They ended up encountering a guard dog and a man with a lethal weapon," said Assistant District Attorney Randall Ivey, who prosecuted the case on behalf of the State. "They handled the situation with great professionalism and restraint, and the District Attorney's Office is pleased to support the work our law enforcement officers do."

After the jury came back with the guilty verdict, Judge Tony Baker sentenced Bearden to 10 years, to serve five in the state penal system.

"Every day, police officers put their lives in danger to protect and serve us. When these officers responded to a domestic dispute, Mr. Bearden refused to respond in a reasonable manner. Instead, he pointed a weapon at them that was as dangerous as a firearm," said District Attorney Shannon Wallace. "In Cherokee County, we respect our law enforcement officers, and my office will do everything in its power to ensure that anyone threatening their safety will be prosecuted."

The Office of the District Attorney for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit is committed to seeking justice, acting with integrity, and collaborating with partner agencies in the criminal justice system in order to protect the citizens of Cherokee County and the State of Georgia.

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