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# Jury finds woman guilty in 1991 killing

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Nearly five years after Levi Bryant died from two .44-caliber gunshots, the woman accused of pulling the trigger was convicted of murder.

It took a Richmond County Superior Court jury a little more than an hour Thursday to find Vanessa Y. Williams guilty of malice murder and use of a weapon during the crime.

Ms. Williams, of Richmond County, will receive an automatic life sentence plus five years. She also faces a possible five-year prison term for being a felon in possession of a weapon.

"Thank you, Jesus," Mr. Bryant's sister, Mary Terry, whispered after the verdict was announced. "I feel like a new person. I'm so happy."

As soon as courtroom decorum allowed, Mrs. Terry hugged Assistant District Attorney Joe Neal Jr.

This week's trial is the second for Ms. Williams on the charges. A mistrial was declared in February 1993 when a jury was unable to reach a unanimous verdict.

"Sometimes it takes a long time to get justice - it took five



**Vanessa Y. Williams:** Defendant had claimed the gun went off accidentally twice.

years this time," Mr. Neal said. "But they (the juries) will find the truth."

Mr. Bryant, 39, had wanted his wife to come home to him and his children the night he died, June 1991, Mr. Neal told the jury at the beginning of the trial Wednesday. But Bernice Bryant wanted to stay out with her friend, Ms. Williams, he said.

About 11:30 p.m. at Davy's Place Liquor, Amusement & Video on Steiner Road, Mr. Bryant made his final plea to his wife to come home. Ms. Williams shot him in the stomach and back and then left the club with Mrs. Bryant, according to trial testimony.

Ms. Williams testified the handgun fired by accident twice as she tried to take it out of Mr. Bryant's hand that night.