

Delta St. murder trial postponed

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celmore@postandcourier.com **Date:** August 7, 2013 **Section:** PC Metro

A **murder** trial that was set to begin Tuesday morning ended up being postponed before opposing sides could utter opening statements after a key witness for the prosecution failed to appear for court. It's been 14 months since Maurice Nathaniel Aiken, 27, was jailed on **murder** and attempted **murder** charges in connection with the shooting death of an 18-year-old North Charleston man on **Delta** Street. But with Tuesday's setback, he will have to continue to wait for a chance to clear his name, Aiken's attorney Lionel Lofton said.

"One of (the prosecution's) material witnesses didn't show up and they felt like they couldn't go forward," Lofton said after meeting with the prosecution to discuss a future court date. "We were a little disappointed. (Aiken's) real anxious for the trial to go forward. You spend all this time preparing for trial, but at the end of the day there's some things you can't control."

Ninth Circuit Solicitor Scarlett Wilson said that the court ordered a bench warrant against the uncooperative witness who held up Tuesday's proceedings. A judge will hold a contempt hearing to decide whether the witness will face a jail sentence, she said.

"This is a problem that we continuously face in these type of crimes," Wilson said.

Too often, witnesses either refuse to cooperate or are unable to be located, Wilson said.

Wilson listed multiple reasons why a witness may be defiant, including fear of retribution, and distrust of the judicial system.

Wilson would not identify Tuesday's missing witness or say why that person was considered crucial to the case against Aiken.

On May 31, 2012, North Charleston police were dispatched to **Delta** Street concerning shots fired.

Demetrius "Meechee" Robinson was found dead, lying on his stomach and bleeding from a gunshot wound to his back, police said.

A second man was also wounded in the shooting.

Aiken, who also goes by the nickname "Crunch" was charged days later and has remained lodged at the Charleston County jail.

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