



HAVEN N. SHOEMAKER, JR.

410-386-2671

*carrollcountystatesattorney.org*

## PRESS RELEASE

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For more information please contact:

**Office of the State's Attorney for Carroll County**

**Phone: 410-386-2671**

**Fax: 410-876-9286**

**Email: [ccstatesattorney@carrollcountymd.gov](mailto:ccstatesattorney@carrollcountymd.gov)**

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Westminster, Maryland – February 22, 2024

### **BALTIMORE MAN CONVICTED OF ARMED ROBBERY OF HAMPSTEAD TOBACCO SHOP**

On February 21, 2024, after a two-day trial in Carroll County Circuit Court, a jury found Gary Qian Newton, age 48, of Baltimore, guilty of First Degree Assault, Robbery with a Dangerous Weapon, Use of a Firearm during a Violent Crime and Possessing a Firearm with a Felony Conviction. Judge Brian L. DeLeonardo set sentencing for April 3, 2024.

During trial, Michael McKeldin, owner of the Flight Delta 9 Tobacco Shop, testified that on April 15, 2023, he was in the shop when an African-American male, dressed in dark clothing, gloves and a mask came into the store and brandished a firearm directing him to the cash register. During the robbery, and in fear of being shot, Mr. McKeldin was able to run out of the store and call for help. Officers from the Hampstead Police Department and Carroll County Sheriff's Office were dispatched to the Flight Delta 9 Tobacco Shop, located in the Hamstead Village Shopping Center in Hampstead. Investigation and camera footage led the officers to the Ridgley House apartments directly behind the shopping center, where one of the residents captured a man wearing the same clothing on camera. The man was identified by Ridgley House resident Joe Castor, as his guest, Gary Newton.

The case was prosecuted by Melissa Hockensmith, Deputy State's Attorney, and was investigated by Corporal Jonathan Cranshaw of the Hampstead Police Department. Carroll County State's Attorney Haven Shoemaker commented on the guilty verdict, "The swift apprehension and subsequent prosecution and conviction of Newton for his brazen armed robbery of a local business committed in broad daylight on Saturday afternoon, speaks volumes about how seriously we in law enforcement in Carroll consider this type of crime to be."