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## crime and courts

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# After guilty plea, man gets 7-year sentence for South Norfolk shooting

By Veronica Gonzalez  
*The Virginian-Pilot*

### CHESAPEAKE

Dominique L. Collins wanted his 9 mm Ruger back.

So he killed a 22-year-old man for it, a prosecutor said.

Collins, 20, testified Friday he shot Michael Callender in self-defense – not to get the gun back – on Nov. 2, 2009.

After weighing both versions of what happened that night in South Norfolk, a judge on Friday sentenced Collins to seven years in prison.

Circuit Judge John W. Brown initially sentenced Collins to 10 years, but then after a somewhat heated argument from Collins' defense attorney, Andrew Protogyrou, and hearing Collins' testimony about the shooting, Brown suspended three years.

Brown had described Callender's death as an "execution-style shooting" when he almost gave the defendant 10 years in prison.

"It's two people with a gun facing each other – it's almost like a duel," Protogyrou said heatedly. "You're assuming it's an execution."

In January, Collins pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter.

Collins testified Callender came up to him and pointed a gun at him in the midst of another shootout nearby. Collins said he feared for his life. Collins is 6-foot-1. The victim was 5 feet, 8 inches tall.

"I pulled my gun and shot," Collins testified. "I



### the defendant

**Dominique L. Collins, 20,** says he shot Michael Callender in self-defense after the 22-year-old pointed a gun at him.

didn't know where it was going to hit him."

Callender was shot in the forehead, according to an autopsy report. The judge determined because Callender was shot in the forehead, it contradicted Collins' testimony that he didn't know exactly where he shot the victim.

Police found a 9 mm Ruger under Callender and determined the victim had fired four rounds at some point, said Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Derek Wagner.

Collins lured Callender to the 1400 block of Oliver St because Collins wanted the Ruger back that he'd loaned to Callender.

"Mr. Callender wouldn't give up the gun, so (Collins shot him)," Wagner said.

"When 17-, 18- and 19-year-olds have an altercation now, they grab guns and start shooting each other," he said. "Life means very little to these kids."

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