

State of South Carolina  
Solicitor, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit

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**PRESS RELEASE**  
**For Immediate Release**

**May 25, 2017**

**Pickens Man Sentenced on Burglary First Degree and Petit Larceny**

Thirteenth Circuit Solicitor Walt Wilkins states that ERIC WAYNE WATKINS, age 49, entered a plea of guilty on May 24, 2017 to Burglary in the First Degree and Petit Larceny and was sentenced to 15 years in the South Carolina Department of Corrections by the Honorable Robin B. Stillwell. The Defendant will have to serve at least 85 % of the 15 year sentence before he becomes eligible for parole. Mr. Watkins entered the plea after the case was called to trial and a jury was selected.

Evidence presented at the plea hearing by Assistant Solicitor Graham Buckner established that on August 4, 2013, Eric Watkins, along with two co-defendants broke into the residence of the victim, 69 year old John Gilstrap, while he was at church and stole two guns from inside his bedroom. The defendant then sold the guns to a pawn shop in Greenville County.