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Belton man acquitted of charges in shooting

By Jeff Zogg

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A jury deliberated for more than five hours Tuesday before returning a verdict of innocent for a Belton man who was charged with the February murder of an Easley man.

Russell Allen Cantrell, 23, of 1210 Country Creek Road, was found innocent of murder and of the lesser charge of manslaughter Tuesday afternoon, according to court documents.

Cantrell was arrested after George Randall Chapman, 30, of 407 Regency St. in Easley was shot in the parking lot of the Taylors Fire Department the morning of Feb. 2, 1989, at about 5:30 a.m.

Chapman died more than a day later of a gunshot wound to the chest, according to the coroner's office.

The jury, which was given the case after a day and a half of testimony, deliberated about four hours on the case.

Defense attorney Stephen Henry asked for a directed verdict of innocent after the state rested its case late Monday afternoon. Judge William Traxler denied the request.

Clay Allen, the 13th Circuit assistant solicitor who prosecuted the case, said the judge told the jury to consider a verdict of guilty of murder or manslaughter or innocent under self-defense or mutual combat.