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Title: Guilty plea means less time in jail First-degree murder convict won a new trial but accepted a deal.

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A Kansas City man admitted Tuesday that he shot two men to death, but that confession earned him a future - his prison sentence cannot be more than 20 years. Since 1994, Craig D. Jones had been serving life without parole on two first-degree murder convictions. An appeals court last year ruled that his defense lawyer had been ineffectual and ordered a new trial.

By then the state's two key witnesses were themselves in prison, one for murder and the other for rape. Those convictions severely damaged their credibility.

Jeff Stigall, assistant Jackson County prosecutor, said he had no choice but to take a plea Tuesday for what he could get - two counts of second-degree murder and two counts of armed criminal action.

Jones, 29, can be sentenced later to no more than 20 years. With time served, he could be eligible for parole in about four years.

On Tuesday, Jones admitted that he shot brothers Eric and Omar Wilson outside the 9500 Club in south Kansas City on Jan. 30, 1994.

Stigall said only the two now-tainted witnesses cooperated with police, although Jones committed the drive-by shooting in front of people leaving a crowded nightclub.

Margaret Wilson, sister of the victims, huddled with crying family members outside the courtroom.

``It's like he's getting a vacation,'' she said. ``This sends the message that if you kill you can get right back out.

``Tell everyone, tell them the only way the system is going to work is if you come forward and testify. ''