

NEWS RELEASE

R. Andrew Murray
District Attorney

January 24, 2013

Convicted felon receives 2 life sentences for murder of pregnant restaurant manager

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Mark Anthony Cox, 23, pled guilty today to 1) first-degree murder, 2) murder of an unborn child, 3) robbery with a dangerous weapon, and 4) felony larceny, in connection with the murder and robbery of Danielle Watson, 25. The Honorable W. Robert Bell, Superior Court Judge, sentenced Cox to two consecutive sentences of *life in prison without the possibility of parole*.

Cox and Ms. Watson worked together at The Flying Biscuit restaurant on Rea Road in Charlotte. On the evening of January 13, 2012, after the other employees had left, Cox got into a heated argument with Ms. Watson in the kitchen and office area about her supervision of him at work. When Ms. Watson began to dial a number on her phone, Cox grabbed a knife and repeatedly stabbed Ms. Watson. Cox then left her body behind a nearby trash receptacle.

After stealing Ms. Watson's purse and car and money from the restaurant's safe, Cox fled to Fayetteville, where he was arrested on January 16, 2012. Police recovered Ms. Watson's car near the house where Cox was arrested. The murder weapon was located in the trunk. Charlotte-Mecklenburg police detectives interviewed Cox in Fayetteville. After initially denying any involvement, Cox confessed to the crimes.

Two months earlier, in November 2011, Cox was released from prison after serving a sentence for conspiracy to commit robbery with a dangerous weapon in Halifax County. He has also previously been convicted of felony breaking or entering and larceny after breaking or entering in Wake County.

At the time of her death, Ms. Watson was 7 to 8 weeks pregnant. The baby did not survive the assault. Just a month before the murder, a new state law went into effect that made it a crime to cause the death or injury of an unborn child. To read more about the law, known as "The Unborn Victims of Violence Act" or "Ethen's Law," [click here](#).

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Mark Anthony Cox

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