

NEWS RELEASE

R. Andrew Murray
District Attorney

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Quarterly Homicide Team report for January-March 2014

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Working to seek justice for victims and closure for their families, the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Homicide Team has continued its aggressive schedule this year to prosecute defendants facing charges of murder, manslaughter and felony death by vehicle. So far in 2014, the team has convicted 13 defendants. Four of those defendants were sentenced to *life in prison without the possibility of parole*.

In January, Mecklenburg County District Attorney Andrew Murray [launched an initiative](#) to allow prosecutors to take more homicide cases to trial than ever before. The initiative involves acquiring more courtroom time and partnering experienced Assistant District Attorneys with the prosecutors on the DA's Homicide Team to work together to try more cases. Between January and March 2014, the team tried four cases, and all four defendants were convicted at trial. The Homicide Team is currently trying its fifth case of the year.

The following defendants were convicted by the Homicide Team between January and March 2014:

January 2014

[Ralph Lewis Gettys](#), 34, was tried for 1) murder, 2) possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and 3) misdemeanor simple assault in connection with the 2012 murder of Raymona Abraham, 21. A jury found him *guilty* of second-degree murder, as well as possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and misdemeanor simple assault. For the murder offense, he was sentenced to 339-419 months in prison. For the firearm offense, he was sentenced to an additional 21-35 months in prison, which is to be served consecutively to the murder sentence. For the simple assault conviction, he was sentenced to 60 days in the Mecklenburg County jail, which is to be served concurrently with the sentence for murder.

Hayward Dixon, 44, pled guilty to 1) voluntary manslaughter and 2) possession of a firearm by a convicted felon in connection with the 2004 death of William Thomas McDowell, 33. Dixon was sentenced to a total of 144-183 months in prison.

Edrick Henighan, 37, pled guilty to felony attempted obstruction of justice in connection with the 2013 murder of Nakio Terrill Cousart, 32. He was sentenced to 8-19 months in prison.

February 2014

[Rashawn Mackey](#), 20, was tried for 1) first-degree murder and 2) discharging a weapon into an occupied vehicle in connection with the 2012 murder of Cortney Terrell Bonds, 23. The jury

found him *guilty* as charged. Mackey was sentenced to *life in prison without the possibility of parole*.

Austin Hazen, 22, pled guilty to 1) felony death by motor vehicle and 2) reckless driving in connection with the 2013 death of Robert Goulding, 36. He was sentenced to 51-74 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending the successful completion of 48 months of supervised probation. As a condition of his probation, Hazen must serve 12 months in prison. Hazen was also ordered to serve six months of continuous alcohol monitoring, undergo an alcohol and mental health assessment and to not drive during his probation.

Darryl McPhaul, 47, pled guilty to felony accessory after the fact to first-degree murder in connection with the 2005 murder of Troy Kidwell. He was sentenced to 168-211 months in prison.

Jacoby Chambers, 22, pled guilty to 1) felony accessory after the fact to first-degree murder and 2) admitted a probation violation in connection with the 2013 murder of Davis Wayne Walthall, 42. He was sentenced to a total of 143-194 months in prison.

March 2014

[Justin Hurd](#), 35, was tried for 1) three counts of first-degree murder, 2) two counts of first-degree kidnapping and 3) first-degree arson in connection with the 2008 murders of Kevin Young, 34, Kinshasa Wagstaff, 33, and Jasmine Hines, 18. The jury found Hurd *guilty* as charged. He was sentenced to three consecutive sentences of *life in prison without the possibility of parole*.

[Jacquece Artavion Forrest](#), 29, pled guilty to two counts of first-degree murder for the 2012 murders of Jennifer Smith, 25, and Luc Gonzalez, 24. Forrest was sentenced to two consecutive sentences of *life in prison without the possibility of parole*.

[Edward Duran Hicks](#), 35, was tried for first-degree murder for the 2012 murder of Nakio Terrill Cousart, 32. A jury found Hicks *guilty* as charged. He was sentenced to *life in prison without the possibility of parole*.

Aveance Bryant, 19, pled guilty to 1) robbery with a dangerous weapon and 2) conspiracy to commit robbery with a dangerous weapon in connection with the 2012 murder of Michael Shull, 21. She will be sentenced at a later date.

Ashley Owens, 20, pled guilty to 1) robbery with a dangerous weapon and 2) conspiracy to commit robbery with a dangerous weapon in connection with the 2012 murder of Michael Shull, 21. She will be sentenced at a later date.

Douglas Zuniga, 33, pled guilty to 1) second-degree murder and 2) assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill inflicting serious injury in connection with the 2013 murder of Jose Jesus Hernandez-Diaz, 26. He was sentenced to 192-234 months in prison.

Note: For more information about the District Attorney's Office, visit www.charmeckda.com. For updates and other information, "like" the DA's Office on Facebook at www.facebook.com/charmeckda and follow us on Twitter: @CharMeckDA.

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