

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Rapist sentenced to 82 years in prison after jury's guilty verdict

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Derek Antonio Smith, Jr. was sentenced today to a minimum of 82 years in prison after a jury found him guilty of sexually assaulting a woman as he held her captive in her Charlotte apartment in 2014. The trial, which began on June 13, 2016, was held in courtroom 5370 before The Honorable Jesse B. Caldwell, Superior Court Judge.

The Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Crimes Against Persons Team tried Smith, 26, for 1) first-degree rape, 2) two counts of first-degree sexual offense, 3) felony breaking or entering, 4) robbery with a dangerous weapon, 5) first-degree kidnapping, 6) larceny of a motor vehicle and 7) felony flee to elude arrest with a motor vehicle. The jury found him *guilty* of first-degree rape, two counts of first-degree sexual offense, felony breaking or entering, the lesser-included offense of common law robbery, first-degree kidnapping and felony flee to elude arrest with a motor vehicle. The jury found him *not guilty* of larceny of a motor vehicle. Judge Caldwell sentenced Smith to a total of 988-1,395 months in prison.



Derek Antonio  
Smith, Jr.

On the evening of September 10, 2014, the victim returned to her Charlotte apartment and began to put away some of her belongings. In her bedroom, she was tackled by Smith, a stranger who had entered her apartment and had been hiding in her closet. Smith held a knife to her neck and a hand over her mouth, telling her not to scream. Smith held the victim captive in her apartment for hours as he sexually assaulted her. After the sexual assault, the victim begged Smith to leave, offering him some of her belongings if he would just leave her apartment. Smith took a cellphone, her debit and credit cards, a laptop and other items. But before he took her laptop, the victim convinced Smith to allow her to back up some of the files on the computer. She used that opportunity to email her parents, asking them to call 911. She also used another cellphone that she'd hidden from Smith to text her parents for help. Smith then drove away in the victim's car.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg police received a description of the stolen car, and the victim helped police track the location of her stolen cellphone through the phone's GPS device. Officers soon spotted the vehicle. Police attempted to stop the car, but Smith refused to stop, leading police on a chase. Officers used a tire deflation device to stop the vehicle and take Smith into custody.

The victim's quick thinking and her willingness to face her assailant by testifying at trial not only helped police quickly apprehend her attacker, but also ensured a conviction that will protect the entire community from this dangerous offender.

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

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