

NEWS RELEASE

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District Attorney

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22 defendants convicted of property crimes

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Twenty-two defendants, including a man who broke into his estranged wife's home, pled guilty to property crimes in Mecklenburg County Superior Court during the week of October 5, 2015. The defendants, who were prosecuted by the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Crimes Against Property Team, entered their guilty pleas in courtroom 5350 before The Honorable Lisa C. Bell, Superior Court Judge. The convictions were for crimes that included breaking or entering, possession of stolen goods, breaking or entering a motor vehicle, financial transaction card fraud and embezzlement.

Among the defendants sent to prison were:

Justin Speer, 36, pled guilty to 1) felony breaking or entering and 2) larceny after breaking or entering. He was sentenced to 9-20 months in prison. In December 2014, the victim returned to her home in Charlotte's University City area to find that her outdoor Christmas lights were turned on despite the fact that they had not been on when she left. When she entered her home, she discovered that her bedroom was in disarray, a guest bedroom window had been pried open and a diamond bracelet and two cellphones were missing. Crime scene officers who responded to the home found fingerprints that matched those of Speer, the victim's estranged husband. Charlotte-Mecklenburg police also checked local pawn shop transactions and found that Speer had pawned the stolen bracelet.

Jerome Planter, 25, pled guilty to felony breaking or entering. He was sentenced to 9-20 months in prison. In November 2014, witnesses watched as two men exited a car that parked in a neighbor's driveway. When the witnesses saw the men kick in the victim's back door, they called police. Police quickly arrived and found Planter and his codefendant, Lance Moore, still inside the victim's residence. Officers noticed that two televisions had been placed at the rear door. Moore previously pled guilty to felony breaking or entering in connection with this incident.

Will Black, 36, pled guilty to 1) felony breaking or entering, 2) larceny after breaking or entering, 3) three counts of breaking or entering a motor vehicle and 4) misdemeanor possession of stolen goods. He was sentenced to 11-23 months in prison, and he was ordered to pay \$4,417 in restitution to the victims.

Note: Almost all guilty pleas entered in criminal administrative court are the result of an agreed upon plea arrangement between the State and the defendant, which is then approved by the sentencing judge. For more information about why most cases must be resolved by plea negotiation instead of jury trial, please visit the "Understanding Criminal Court" section of the DA's website at www.charmeckda.com.

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