

NEWS RELEASE

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Man sentenced to life in prison for raping wife, murdering her parents

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Vurnel Lee Smith, Jr., will spend the rest of his life in prison after he was convicted today of raping his wife and killing her mother and stepfather, 65-year-old Jacqueline White-Gordon and 69-year-old Rufus Gordon. Smith entered his guilty plea in courtroom 5310 before The Honorable Robert C. Ervin, Superior Court Judge.

Smith, 43, pled guilty to 1) two counts of first-degree murder and 2) first-degree rape. Judge Ervin sentenced him to two consecutive sentences of *life in prison without the possibility of parole*, as well as an additional 240-300 months in prison.

In July 2017, Smith was kicked out of the home where he had been living with his wife and her mother and stepfather on Red Clay Lane in Charlotte due to Smith's abusive behavior toward his wife. About two weeks later, on July 25, 2017, his wife was leaving work and tried to call her parents but could not reach them. She became concerned, and when she arrived at home, she found Smith, who had broken into the home. He attacked her with a metal pole, so she ran to the door, screaming for help, but Smith pulled her back inside. Smith knocked her unconscious, and when she awoke, she was bound to a bed. Over the course of the next two days, Smith repeatedly raped her.

On the morning of July 27, 2017, Smith told his wife he was going to buy some camping equipment and live in the woods. He checked her restraints to ensure they were tight and then left the home. After struggling for 20-30 minutes to loosen her bindings, she freed herself. That is when she discovered her mother, Mrs. White-Gordon, dead in another bedroom. She was unable to find her stepfather, and fearing that Smith may return, she drove herself to a local hospital in her stepfather's car and reported what Smith had done.

When police arrived at the home, they found blood in the home. They soon found Mr. Gordon in the trunk of the car that the survivor had driven to the hospital. The medical examiner found that both Mr. Gordon and Mrs. White-Gordon died as a result of strangulation, and they also suffered other injuries.

Today, the survivor made the courageous decision to address the court, describing how this trauma has affected her life. She shared memories of her parents watching football together and their love of God. Our thoughts remain with the survivor and her entire family. Today's



Rufus Gordon and
Jacqueline White-Gordon

plea ensures that a man who committed appalling violence will never again walk our streets and provides finality such that the family can continue the healing process.

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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