

District Attorney's Office

State of North Carolina

26th Prosecutorial District

Mecklenburg County

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NEWS RELEASE

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Jury convicts man of raping 13-year-old girl

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – The Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Felony Special Victims Team tried two defendants during its latest trial session in Superior Court. The session began July 5, 2022, and ended on July 13, 2022, with a guilty verdict in the case of a man who raped a 13-year-old girl. The proceedings were held in courtrooms 5370 and 5110 before The Honorable George C. Bell and The Honorable Robert C. Ervin, Superior Court Judges. Court was closed July 4, 2022, in observance of Independence Day.

Dametri Dale, 24, was tried for 1) statutory rape of a child 15 years of age or younger and 2) two counts of indecent liberties with a child. The jury found him *guilty* as charged. Judge Ervin sentenced Dale to a total of 117-211 months in prison. He was also sentenced to an additional 21-35 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 60 months of supervised probation. Upon his release from prison, Dale must register as a sex offender for 30 years. Dale met the victim at a national conference that the victim attended with her church. Dale began communicating with the victim through social media, and in 2017, he left his home in Florida and traveled to Charlotte. While in Charlotte, he picked up the victim and brought her to his hotel, where he sexually assaulted her. She was 13 years old. DNA evidence discovered in the victim's sexual assault forensic exam and on the defendant corroborated the victim's account and identified Dale as the perpetrator. The survivor, now 18, showed incredible bravery at trial, particularly as she was cross-examined on the witness stand by her rapist, who chose to represent himself.

Bijaan Cole, 28, was tried for intimidating a witness. Jurors indicated to the court that they had not been able to reach a unanimous verdict, and as they continued deliberating, Cole decided to enter a guilty plea. Cole pled guilty to intimidating a witness, and Judge Bell sentenced him to 14-26 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 24 months of supervised probation. He was ordered to have no contact with the victim.

Jorge Gutierrez-Flores, 44, pled guilty to statutory rape of a child 15 years of age or younger. Judge Bell sentenced him to 144-233 months in prison. Upon his release from prison, he must register as a sex offender for the rest of his life.

Robert Thorne, 42, pled guilty to 1) second-degree kidnapping and 2) assault on a female. Judge Bell sentenced him to 29-47 months in prison.

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