

District Attorney's Office

State of North Carolina

26th Prosecutorial District

Mecklenburg County

[www.charmeckda.com](http://www.charmeckda.com)

# NEWS RELEASE

Spencer B. Merriweather III

District Attorney

September 1, 2022

## Man sentenced to at least 20 years in prison for wreck that killed 5

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – A man who caused a crash that killed four family members, as well as a passenger in another car, and seriously injured another driver has been sentenced to at least 20 years in prison after pleading guilty to all charges.

Today, Dakeia Charles, 26, pled guilty as charged to 1) five counts of second-degree murder, 2) assault with a deadly weapon inflicting serious injury, 3) two counts of assault with a deadly weapon, 4) speeding, 5) reckless driving, 6) driving while impaired, and 7) failure to comply with a license restriction. The Honorable Louis A. Trosch, Jr., Superior Court Judge, sentenced Charles to a total of 250-324 months in prison. The Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Homicide Team prosecuted the case.

Around 7:30 p.m. July 3, 2020, Charles was driving recklessly at high speeds on the Interstate-485 Outer Loop near W.T. Harris Boulevard. A witness indicated that Charles was driving more than 100 mph and weaving in and out of traffic. At some point, Charles sideswiped a box truck that was driving in the lane beside him, and his vehicle became wedged under the box truck's axle. As a result, the driver of the box truck lost control and crossed over the median into oncoming traffic. The box truck began to spin, and in the process, the rear of the box truck went up and over another vehicle, causing fatal injuries to 58-year-old Mark Barlaan, who was riding in the backseat of that vehicle. As this was happening, Matthew Obester, 34, who was driving an SUV, tried to avoid the collision but ultimately crashed into the spinning box truck. Mr. Obester, his wife, Andrea Obester, 39, and their two daughters, 9-year-old Violet and 12-year-old Elizabeth, were killed. The driver of the box truck was seriously injured and had to be extricated from the truck.

Charles was also injured, and when his blood was tested four hours after the crash, his blood alcohol content was 0.07. Due to a previous driving while impaired conviction in another county, Charles had been ordered to abide by a license restriction that prohibited him from driving with a blood alcohol content of 0.04 or more.

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

// End //