

NEWS RELEASE

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Jury convicts man of rape during Special Victims Team trial

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – A Mecklenburg County jury convicted a man of second-degree rape and second-degree sex offense after a two-week trial led by the District Attorney's Special Victims Team. During the trial session, the team also tried two other cases. Another defendant entered a guilty plea. The proceedings were held February 27-March 10, 2023, before The Honorable David H. Strickland, The Honorable Karen Eady-Williams, and The Honorable Matt J. Osman, Superior Court Judges.

Rogelio Ramirez, 32, was tried for 1) second-degree rape, 2) three counts of second-degree sex offense, and 3) second-degree kidnapping in connection with unrelated incidents on two consecutive nights involving two survivors. After deliberating for two days, the jury found him *guilty* of second-degree rape and one count of second-degree sex offense related to one survivor. The jury found him *not guilty* of the remaining charges related to the other survivor. Judge Strickland sentenced Ramirez to a total of 144-294 months in prison. Upon his release from prison, Ramirez must register as a sex offender for 30 years. In December 2019, a survivor was celebrating with friends in Charlotte's South End. She was intoxicated, and her friends put her in an Uber to drive her home. At some point after being dropped off, she encountered Ramirez, and she awoke to Ramirez raping her in her apartment. She lost consciousness, and when she awoke again, she went to the hospital, where a sexual assault exam was performed. Meanwhile, Ramirez had used the woman's credit card to buy gas and breakfast at Waffle House. Charlotte-Mecklenburg police used that information to identify and locate Ramirez through videos and vehicle information. His DNA matched the DNA found during the survivor's sexual assault exam. When police searched Ramirez's vehicle, they found items belonging to this survivor, as well as another woman. When police contacted that woman, she reported that she had also been sexually assaulted by Ramirez on what would have been the night before the other incident. At trial, she testified that she was intoxicated after a night out with friends and believed she was getting into an Uber but mistakenly got into a car driven by Ramirez. After passing out in the car, she said, she awoke to Ramirez sexually assaulting her. She fought him off and fled the car. She said she did not call police because she was embarrassed about what had happened. Ultimately, the jury did not convict Ramirez of charges related to this assault. The District Attorney's Office is incredibly grateful for the bravery and strength shown by both survivors and their willingness to stand up to protect other women and the entire community.

Donovan Blakeney, 48, was tried for 1) two counts of first-degree rape, 2) conspiracy to commit first-degree rape, 3) first-degree kidnapping, and 4) robbery with a dangerous weapon. The jury was unable to reach a unanimous verdict. As a result, Judge Osman declared a mistrial.

Marquis Hairston, 36, was tried for 1) misdemeanor child abuse and 2) assault on a female. The jury found him *not guilty*.

Leon Lynn, 54, pled guilty to indecent liberties with a child. Judge Osman sentenced him to 15-18 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 24 months of supervised probation. As a condition of his probation, Lynn must participate in psychiatric counseling. Lynn was ordered to register as a sex offender for 30 years.

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

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