

**District Attorney's
Office**
State of North Carolina
26th Prosecutorial District
Mecklenburg County

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NEWS RELEASE

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III**
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Jury convicts man of rape during Special Victims Team trial

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – A survivor who was raped courageously testified in Mecklenburg County Superior Court, resulting in a jury finding her attacker guilty of multiple crimes. The trial, which began on September 9, 2024, was held in courtroom 5110 before the Honorable Reggie E. McKnight, Superior Court Judge.

Rene Velez Villavicencio, 28, was tried for 1) second-degree rape, 2) second-degree forcible rape, 3) second-degree sex offense, and 4) first-degree kidnapping. The jury found him *guilty as charged*. Judge McKnight sentenced him to 146-296 months in prison. Upon his release from prison, Villavicencio must register as a sex offender for the rest of his life.

In the early morning hours of August 15, 2020, the survivor was at a birthday party for a friend. At trial, she testified that she was intoxicated and decided it wasn't safe for her to drive home, so she laid down and fell asleep. She woke up a few hours later and an unknown person was lying next to her. The person touched her thigh then sexually assaulted her before leaving the room. The survivor, paralyzed with fear, eventually pulled herself together and was going to drive home. She stopped to use a bathroom on the way out. Immediately, the same attacker entered the bathroom behind her, pinned her against the sink, and raped her before leaving the bathroom. The survivor fled the house and went home.

She went to the hospital the following day and a sexual assault exam was conducted. Detectives with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department obtained DNA samples from potential suspects who attended the party. In April of 2022, results of that testing found that the defendant's DNA matched the DNA found during the survivor's sexual assault exam.

The District Attorney's Office is incredibly grateful for the courage and strength shown by the survivor and her willingness to stand up to protect other women and the entire community.

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