

NEWS RELEASE

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Trials, guilty pleas result in convictions of sex offenders, robber

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Juries recently convicted a sex offender and a robber in Mecklenburg County Superior Court, and two other defendants were convicted when they entered guilty pleas. The defendants were prosecuted during the week of April 20, 2015, by the Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Crimes Against Persons Team in courtrooms 5370 and 5150 before The Honorable Jesse B. Caldwell, The Honorable Forrest D. Bridges and The Honorable Robert T. Sumner, Superior Court Judges.

Martin Pena, 45, was tried for 1) second-degree sex offense, 2) attempted second-degree rape, 3) attempted second-degree sex offense, 4) second-degree kidnapping and 5) sexual battery. After deliberating for less than 30 minutes, the jury found Pena *guilty* as charged. Judge Sumner sentenced Pena to a total of 185-259 months in prison. In May 2012, the victim went to a friend's home in Charlotte, where she encountered Pena. When the homeowner stepped outside, Pena forced the victim into a room and sexually assaulted her. DNA evidence collected from the victim corroborated her account of the assault and contradicted Pena's claim that he'd had only minimal contact with the victim.

Victor Montes, 39, was called for trial on multiple sex offense charges. After a jury was selected and just before opening statements, Montes decided to plead guilty as charged. He pled guilty to 1) two counts of first-degree sex offense, 2) two counts of sexual activity by a substitute parent and 3) two counts of indecent liberties with a child. He was sentenced to 185-240 months in prison. This case was reported to police in 2013, when the 14-year-old victim told her mother that Montes, a relative, had molested her when she was about 7 years old. Montes confessed to police. During Montes' sentencing, the victim's mother thanked Charlotte-Mecklenburg police and the District Attorney's Office for their hard work on the case.

Lester Artis, 58, was tried for 1) robbery with a dangerous weapon and 2) conspiracy to commit robbery with a dangerous weapon. At the close of the State's evidence, Judge Caldwell dismissed the conspiracy charge. The jury then found Artis guilty of the lesser-included offense of common law robbery. Judge Caldwell sentenced Artis to 25-39 months in prison.

Kenneth Massey, 24, pled guilty to 1) felony flee to elude arrest with a motor vehicle, 2) two counts of felony carrying a concealed weapon, 3) discharging a firearm in the city limits and 4) misdemeanor possession of marijuana. Massey was sentenced to 5-15 months in the Mecklenburg County Jail. He was also sentenced to an additional 5-15 months in prison; that sentence was suspended pending his successful completion of 24 months of supervised probation.

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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