

NEWS RELEASE

R. Andrew Murray
District Attorney

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6-week trial session targets sex offenders

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Mecklenburg County prosecutors' diligent work over the course of a six-week span led to four rapists being convicted by juries and sent to prison for decades. The District Attorney's Crimes Against Persons Team recently concluded these special trial sessions, which were dedicated to bringing sex offenders to justice. During this time period, two other defendants were also tried for robbery and assault charges, and another defendant entered a guilty plea.

This year, District Attorney Andrew Murray has devoted additional resources and court time to the Assistant District Attorneys who prosecute cases of sexual assaults against adults and children. In 2014, the DA's Homicide Team utilized a similar trial initiative – which involved securing additional courtrooms and judges and partnering prosecutors with experienced colleagues on other prosecution teams – to successfully reduce the number of homicide cases pending trial. This year, the DA's Crimes Against Persons Team is using the same approach with sexual assault cases in an effort to more quickly seek justice and closure for victims. Each of the sex offenders tried in August and September 2015 was convicted by a jury.

Between August 17, 2015, and September 25, 2015, the court proceedings were held before The Honorable Hugh B. Lewis, The Honorable Lisa C. Bell and The Honorable Yvonne Mims Evans, Superior Court Judges.

The following defendants were prosecuted by the Crimes Against Persons Team:

[Drayton Lamar Thompson](#), 45, was tried for 1) five counts of first-degree rape, 2) four counts of first-degree sexual offense, 3) two counts of first-degree kidnapping, 4) second-degree kidnapping and 5) felony conspiracy. The jury concluded the 20-day trial by finding him *guilty* of 12 of the 13 offenses. The jury found him *not guilty* of one count of first-degree sexual offense. Judge Lewis sentenced him to three consecutive sentences of *life in prison*. Thompson was charged in connection with three separate sexual assaults that occurred in 1991. The cases went cold until the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's Sexual Assault Cold Case Unit reopened the investigations and discovered DNA evidence that linked Thompson to each of the three assaults.

[Clairy Kanyinda Mbaya](#), 26, was tried for 1) statutory rape, 2) statutory sex offense and 3) indecent liberties with a child. The jury found him *guilty* as charged. Following a four-day trial, Judge Bell sentenced Mbaya to two consecutive sentences of 300-420 months in prison each, totaling a minimum of 50 years in prison. Upon his release from prison, he must register as a sex offender and participate in satellite-based monitoring for the rest of his life. In

February 2014, the teenage victim was at home alone in Charlotte when Mbaya, wearing black clothing and a mask, entered the home and raped her.

Jesus Martinez, 26, was tried for 1) four counts of indecent liberties with a child, 2) four counts of a sexual act by a substitute parent, 3) two counts of rape of a child and 4) two counts of sexual offense with a child. At the close of the State's evidence, the court dismissed one count of rape of a child as a result of testimony provided at trial. The jury found Martinez *guilty* of the remaining charges. Judge Evans sentenced him to two consecutive sentences of 300-420 months in prison, totaling a minimum of 600 months in prison. Upon his release from prison, Martinez must register as a sex offender and participate in satellite-based monitoring for the rest of his life. The trial lasted five days. Martinez molested a child over the course of more than a year.

Frederick Eugene Sullivan, 44, was tried for 1) two counts of second-degree rape, 2) six counts of second-degree sexual offense, 3) assault on a female and 4) communicating threats. The jury found him *guilty* as charged. After nine days of trial, Judge Lewis sentenced Sullivan to four consecutive sentences of 110-192 months in prison each, totaling a minimum of 36 years in prison. Upon his release from prison, Sullivan must register as a sex offender and participate in satellite-based monitoring for the rest of his life. Sullivan sexually assaulted a woman on the campus of Johnson C. Smith University in 2013.

Jamel Whatley, 27, was tried for 1) robbery with a dangerous weapon, 2) conspiracy to commit robbery with a dangerous weapon and 3) assault with a deadly weapon inflicting serious injury. The jury found him *guilty* as charged. Judge Lewis sentenced Whatley to a total of 108-150 months in prison. The trial lasted five days.

Kentrell Massey, 22, was tried for 1) two counts of assault with a deadly weapon with the intent to kill and 2) conspiracy to commit assault with a deadly weapon with the intent to kill. The jury found him *not guilty*.

Juan Benjamin, 23, pled guilty to 1) assault by pointing a gun and 2) carrying a concealed gun. He was sentenced to a total of 120 days in the Mecklenburg County Jail.

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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