

MESSAGE FROM PROSECUTOR SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

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2003 Murder and Rape Case Finally Over Man Sentenced to 55 years to Life for Murder and Rape

(Akron, September 3, 2010) ... Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh announced today that Jerron Johnson, 24, of Akron, was found guilty by Judge Thomas Teodosio of Aggravated Murder, Rape, a felony of the first degree, Kidnapping, a felony of the first degree, Attempted Rape, a felony of the second degree, Aggravated Burglary, a felony of the first degree, and two counts of Rape, felonies of the first degree.

After a compelling and emotional statement from the murder victim's sister, Johnson was sentenced to 55-years to Life in prison, and five years of Post Release Control, and required to register as a lifetime sex offender.

Prosecutor Walsh said, "This case exemplifies how the criminal justice system went above and beyond to ensure a fair trial. Justice was served today for the victims and their families involved in this case, and society at large was also protected from a very dangerous man. While Johnson had a very difficult life due to a failed childhood, it did not give him a license to murder and rape."

Johnson's charges stem from three different victims, one who was raped and murdered, one who was raped, and one who he attempted to rape.

On October 5, 2001, Johnson was 15-years old when he raped and murdered 45-year-old Jean Zienka in her home. Johnson lived behind Ms. Zienka's home. At the time, police did not have any suspects.

On October 15, 2001, 10 days after the murder, Johnson attempted to rape another woman who lived near his home. Johnson dragged the victim behind a house and was tearing at her clothes when she was able to get away from him and run. She called 9-1-1 and identified her attacker as a young black male, who was deaf and had two different color eyes (one blue and one brown). Police still did not have a suspect.

On November 21, 2002, Johnson broke into a home also in his neighborhood, and raped a woman. After the woman and her daughter fought Johnson, the daughter got away and ran for help. Johnson locked the door and went back at the mother, raping and strangling her until she lost consciousness. The daughter noticed that the man had two different color eyes.

The police now had a suspect given the consistent description of the young, deaf, black male with two different colored eyes. After a search warrant was obtained, Johnson's

DNA was taken and sent to a lab to compare with DNA left with his murder and rape victims.

On February 3, 2003, Johnson put a chair under the window of a 13-year-old girl and was watching her as she got dressed. The man wore a black mask and had one blue and one brown eye. The girl screamed and the masked man ran away. The police were called, but no arrests were made. On March 6, 2003, the girl and her grandmother saw Johnson and called police again. The police arrested the then 17-year-old Johnson and charged him with voyeurism. Teodosio found Johnson not guilty of voyeurism.

In April 2003, DNA tests came back positive against Johnson in both the murder and rape cases. Johnson was charged and was eventually bound over to Common Pleas Court as an adult. At this time, it was determined that Johnson was not competent to stand trial because he was never taught American Sign Language. After Johnson was determined to be competent in American Sign Language, a bench trial was held with Judge Teodosio.

Johnson was not born deaf. When his mother failed to obtain medical attention for an ear infection at the age of seven months, it resulted in his deafness.