

Serial Killer Sentenced to 160 Years

October 7, 2021

Oct. 6, 2021

Serial Killer Sentenced to 160 Years for Killing Three Women

Newark - Acting Essex County Prosecutor Theodore N. Stephens, II, announced that convicted serial killer Khalil Wheeler-Weaver, now 25, of Orange was sentenced today to 160 years for killing three young woman and attempting to kill a fourth between August 2016 and November 2016.

In December 2019, an Essex County jury convicted Wheeler-Weaver on three counts of murder in connection with the deaths of Sarah Butler, 20, Robin West, 19, and Joanne Brown, 33. He was also found guilty of the kidnapping, sexual assault, and attempted murder of a fourth woman, Tiffany Taylor, who survived her attack.

Today, the Honorable Mark Ali, Judge of the Superior Court, sentenced Wheeler-Weaver to 160 years in New Jersey State Prison. Under the No Early Release Act (NERA), Wheeler-Weaver must serve 145 years before he is eligible for parole.

“The sentence today sends a clear and unequivocal message that each of these young women mattered. This defendant mistakenly believed that he could kill them and dump their bodies, and no one would care. He miscalculated. The jury made it clear with its verdict when it convicted Wheeler-Weaver on every count. And today the Judge, with his sentence, made it clear that each of these women would receive justice. I want to thank the Essex County assistant prosecutors, investigators and others in law enforcement who worked to bring us to this day,” said Acting Prosecutor Stephens. “Most importantly, I want to thank the surviving victim, Tiffany Taylor, and the friends and families of the other victims who played a pivotal role in the case.”

Assistant Prosecutor Adam B. Wells, who tried the case, with Assistant Prosecutor Mira T. Ohm, said, “I am grateful to Ms. Taylor, and the families and friends of Joanne Brown, Sarah Buter and Robin West for the grace and strength they showed throughout

this horrendous ordeal. I hope that today's sentencing, and the promise that the defendant will be incarcerated for the rest of his life can allow them to close this chapter and move forward honoring those who are not able to do so themselves."

After a two-month trial, the jury took less than three hours to find Wheeler-Weaver guilty on all counts, including three counts of murder. In addition to the murder counts, Wheeler-Weaver was also found guilty of kidnapping, aggravated sexual assault and attempted murder of Taylor. The jury also convicted him of three counts of desecration of human remains and aggravated arson.

Butler, a Montclair resident who was attending Jersey City University was murdered on Nov. 22, 2016. Her body was found in Eagle Rock Reservation in West Orange on Dec. 1, 2016.

Brown of Newark was murdered on Oct. 22, 2016. Her body was found in a vacant home in Orange on Dec. 5, 2016. West, a native of Philadelphia who was living in Union Township, was murdered on Sept. 1, 2016 in Orange. Wheeler-Weaver set fire to her body and then torched the vacant home.

Acting Prosecutor Stephens thanked all the law enforcement agencies that worked so closely with the Essex County Prosecutor's Office on this case. He also lauded Sergeant Christopher Smith of the ECPO, Lieutenant Michael Krusznis of the Newark Police Department, retired ECPO Captain Thomas Kelly, retired ECPO Sergeant Paul Sarbando, and retired ECPO Detective Mario Suarez.