

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Notice of Sentencing
Man Convicted of Murdering His Wife in 2023 is Sentenced to Life Plus 5 Years
State vs. Charles Terry Collins

February 2, 2024 – District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway announces that earlier today convicted murderer Charles Terry Collins, 71, was sentenced by Superior Court Judge Shannon Wallace to life plus five years to serve in prison. The sentencing hearing was held following a January trial in which Collins was found guilty of malice murder, felony murder, family violence aggravated assault, and possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony. The jury trial ended on January 29.

Charges stem from a Cherokee Sheriff's Office investigation of a shooting that occurred at approximately 2:10 a.m. on July 24, 2023, at a home off New Light Road in Canton. When CSO deputies arrived at the home, they found Collins holding a Smith & Wesson .38 special revolver and his deceased wife, Deborah Sherry Collins, 63, lying on the living room floor, with a gunshot wound to the neck and a knife in her right hand.

Collins told detectives that he acted in self-defense after his wife charged him with the knife. However, detectives noticed that the knife was not covered in blood, as were other objects near the victim's body. Later, a GBI expert in latent print processing determined that there were no discernable fingerprints on the knife.

“To the untrained eye, this crime scene could have appeared to be an open and shut case of self-defense. Luckily, the trained investigators and crime scene technician with the Cherokee Sheriff's Office didn't jump to conclusions and conducted a thorough investigation. They picked up on the obvious signs of staging, indicating the knife was not in Deborah's hand when she was shot,” said Deputy Chief Assistant District Attorney Rachel Ashe, of the Domestic Violence Unit. “For the jury, probably the most shocking evidence at trial was the defendant's words and actions after shooting his wife -- he did not render aid and he did not call 911; instead, he called his son and told him he ‘shot that b----.’”

During the six-day trial, the State called 15 witnesses to the stand and presented more than 300 exhibits as evidence, including 911 recordings, crime scene photos, and physical evidence. The jury deliberated for about three hours before convicting Collins on all charges.

“By the conclusion of this trial, it was clear to the jury that this man was acting out of anger when he killed his wife, not fear. He refused to help her and just left her there to die,” said District Attorney Susan K. Treadaway. “This crime has torn this family apart, and it is our hope that this sentence can start to provide healing and closure.”

The case was investigated by the Cherokee Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Deputy Chief Assistant District Attorney Rachel Ashe, of the Domestic Violence Unit, with the assistance of Assistant District Attorney Elliot Stone, of the Office of the District Attorney, Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit.

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The Office of the District Attorney for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit is committed to seeking justice, acting with integrity, and collaborating with partner agencies in the criminal justice system in order to protect the citizens of Cherokee County and the State of Georgia.

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