

Nagee Green Appeal - Affirmed

January 14, 2021

District Attorney Matthew Van Houten announced today that the appeal filed by Nagee Green has been denied in its entirety.

Nagee Green, now 27 years old, was convicted in 2017 by a Tompkins County jury of Murder in the Second Degree for the 2016 homicide of Ithaca College student Anthony Nazaire, and Assault in the Second Degree for the stabbing of a second Ithaca College student. County Court Judge John C. Rowley sentenced Green to a term of twenty years in state prison.

The Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court, Third Judicial Department, issued an eleven-page decision today, denying Green's appeal and affirming his convictions.

Deputy District Attorney Andrew Bonavia wrote the brief and argued the case before the panel of justices. Paul Connolly of Albany, New York represented Green in connection with the appeal.

District Attorney Van Houten stated "This decision represents the final product of the extensive judicial review of the two trials of Nagee Green. Every legal challenge raised by the defendant was considered by the appellate court and found to be without merit. Nagee Green received two fair trials and was proven beyond a reasonable doubt to have committed the murder of Anthony Nazaire. While nothing can bring Anthony back, this decision provides a measure of justice for his family."

Alexander Mosher - Conviction

April 27, 2021

District Attorney Matthew Van Houten announced today that Alexander S. Mosher, 31, of Ithaca was convicted by a jury of the top charge of Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Third Degree, a Class D Felony, and two counts of Menacing in the Second Degree after a trial in the Tompkins County Court. The trial commenced on Monday, April 19, 2021 and the jury arrived at the verdict on the morning of April 22, 2021.

The trial was the first jury trial conducted in Tompkins County since the beginning of the pandemic. The Court implemented extensive precautions to ensure that the proceedings were conducted with the safety of the jurors, witnesses and litigants as top priority.

Sentencing has been scheduled for May 21, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. before Judge John C. Rowley.

Assistant District Attorney Veronica Fox prosecuted the case. Robert LaLonde was the defendant's attorney.

Jeffrey Skinner - Sentencing

July 9, 2021

District Attorney Matthew Van Houten announced today that Jeffrey Skinner, 45, of Groton, was sentenced in Tompkins County Court yesterday afternoon. Judge Joseph R. Cassidy imposed a sentence of four to twelve (4 – 12) years in State Prison in connection with his conviction for Vehicular Manslaughter in the First Degree, a Class C Felony. Skinner was also sentenced to a term of one to three (1 – 3) years in prison for two counts of Driving While Intoxicated, a Class E Felony, and a term of two to four (2 – 4) years in prison for Leaving the Scene of a Personal Injury Incident Without Reporting, a Class D Felony, under the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law. The sentences will run concurrently. The maximum legal sentence would have been five to fifteen (5 – 15) years in State Prison.

Skinner admitted to operating a motor vehicle while in an intoxicated condition on May 3, 2020 in the Town of Groton, and to causing the death of Professor Jerrie Gavalchin, 64, also of Groton. Professor Gavalchin was walking her bicycle along the fog line of Lick Street when the defendant struck her with his vehicle, causing her to suffer fatal injuries. Skinner also admitted to leaving the scene of the accident without calling 911.

Assistant District Attorney Daniel Johnson prosecuted the case and Luke Fenchel represented the defendant.

Samantha Batt and Carl Batt, the daughter and husband of Jerrie Gavalchin, spoke at the sentencing hearing, and each gave a poignant and moving description of their loss and the need for accountability and consequences for the defendant's decision to drink and drive, then leave the scene after the fatal collision.

Van Houten said "it is my hope that the sentence imposed in this case will serve as a deterrent and an example of the devastating consequences of operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated. Nothing the criminal justice system can do will ever provide true justice or closure to the victim's family, but I believe that the Court's sentence today is a fair and appropriate outcome under the parameters of New York State law."

Jeffrey Skinner - Plea

May 7, 2021

District Attorney Matthew Van Houten announced today that Jeffrey Skinner, 44, of Groton, appeared in Tompkins County Court yesterday and pleaded guilty to the crimes of Vehicular Manslaughter in the First Degree, a Class C Felony, two counts of Driving While Intoxicated, a Class E Felony, and Leaving the Scene of a Personal Injury Incident Without Reporting, a Class D Felony, under the New York State Vehicle and Traffic Law. Skinner pleaded guilty to each count of the four-count indictment and waived his right to appeal.

The maximum possible sentence is a term of five to fifteen years in New York State prison.

Skinner admitted to operating a motor vehicle while in an intoxicated condition on May 3, 2020 in the Town of Groton, and to causing the death of Professor Jerrie Gavalchin, 64, also of Groton. Professor Gavalchin was walking her bicycle along the fog line of Lick Street when the defendant struck her with his vehicle, causing her to suffer fatal injuries. Skinner also admitted to leaving the scene of the accident without calling 911.

Jerrie Gavalchin was a beloved and highly respected professor at Cornell University. She had been married for almost forty years and was a loving mother of an adult daughter.

Van Houten said, "I would like to recognize the Tompkins County Sheriff's Office and the New York State Police for their exemplary work which has now culminated in the defendant pleading guilty to all charges. While nothing can make this tragedy less painful for the victim's family, the defendant's acceptance of responsibility represents a small measure of justice."

Assistant District Attorney Daniel Johnson prosecuted the case and Luke Fenchel represented the defendant.

Sentencing has been scheduled for July 8, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. before County Court Judge Joseph R. Cassidy.

Dale Harbin - Conviction

August 30, 2021

District Attorney Matthew Van Houten announced today that Dale J. Harbin, 44, of Brooktondale, was convicted by a jury on Friday afternoon of two counts of Sexual Abuse in the First Degree, a Class D Felony, and Course of Sexual Contact Against a Child in the Second Degree, also a Class D Felony. Harbin was convicted of all charges after a trial in the Tompkins County Court. The trial commenced on Tuesday, August 24, 2021 and concluded on Friday, August 27, 2021.

Sentencing has been scheduled for October 8, 2021 before Judge John C. Rowley.

Assistant District Attorney Heidi Paulino prosecuted the case. Kristine Shaw was the defendant's attorney.

Ramello Jackson, Sherrod Erskine, and Trimard Campbell Indictment

November 23, 2021

District Attorney Matthew Van Houten announced today that three individuals have been indicted for crimes arising out of the events of November 9, 2021, which originated with a report of shots fired near the Department of Motor Vehicles in the City of Ithaca and culminated in a manhunt in the Village of Cayuga Heights. District Attorney Van Houten presented the case to the Grand Jury on November 17, 2021.

Ramello Q. Jackson, 22, of Ithaca, Trimard C. Campbell, 22, of Utica, and Sherrod E. Erskine, 20, of Rochester, were indicted by the Tompkins County Grand Jury for Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Second Degree, Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Third Degree, Criminal Possession of a Firearm, and Reckless Endangerment in the First Degree. Campbell was also charged with Unlawfully Fleeing a Police Officer in a Motor Vehicle in the Third Degree.

The top charge, Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Second Degree, is a Class C Violent Felony charge for which the maximum penalty is fifteen (15) years imprisonment.

Two of the individuals, Jackson and Campbell, were arrested on November 9th and arraigned in the Lansing Town Court, which set bail at \$4,000.00 cash or \$8,000.00 bond. Jackson posted bail but was later remanded to the Tompkins County Jail on an unrelated matter, where he remains in custody. Campbell has been incarcerated in the Tompkins County Jail since November 9th. Erskine was not apprehended on November 9th and a warrant is now active for his arrest.

Van Houten stated “the recent trend of gun violence in our community will not be tolerated. The District Attorney’s Office will swiftly and zealously prosecute individuals arrested with illegal firearms in Tompkins County. I want to commend the efforts of local law enforcement, specifically the Tompkins County Sheriff’s Office, for their quick and effective response to this highly volatile incident.

Tyler Rodkey - Sentencing

December 10, 2021

District Attorney Matthew Van Houten announced today that Tyler W. Rodkey, 34, of Dryden, was sentenced in Tompkins County Court yesterday afternoon. Judge Joseph R. Cassidy imposed a sentence of fifteen (15) years in State Prison in connection with Rodkey's conviction for Assault in the First Degree, a Class B Felony. Assault in the First Degree is equivalent to the charge of Attempted Murder in the Second Degree; both are Class B felonies with the same sentencing range. Additionally, the Court imposed a period of five (5) years of Post Release Supervision. The maximum legal sentence would have been twenty-five (25) years in State Prison with a period of five (5) years of Post Release Supervision. Rodkey has been incarcerated since his arrest in the summer of 2020.

Rodkey admitted to intentionally causing serious physical injury with a deadly weapon or dangerous instrument, to his then 20-year-old-girlfriend (A.R.). In the early morning hours of July 25, 2020, defendant stabbed A.R. twenty-two (22) times with a kitchen knife causing her to suffer life-threatening injuries. Tompkins County Sheriff's Deputies responded to a nearby home where they found A.R. lying in the doorway having collapsed from her injuries after fleeing from her attacker. Rodkey was identified as the perpetrator and was taken into custody later that day following a stand-off with law enforcement officers.

Assistant District Attorney Emily Perks Quinlan prosecuted the case and John Fitzgerald represented the defendant.

A.R. provided a statement that was read at the sentencing hearing and gave a poignant and moving description of how Rodkey's crime has impacted her life and well-being. A.R. also addressed the need for accountability and consequences for the defendant's assault in order to provide safety to the community.

Van Houten said, "this sentence marks the end of a very traumatic experience for the victim and her family. While a case of this seriousness always warrants careful consideration and diligent efforts to understand the underlying human elements of the case, the bottom line is always public safety. I believe that the sentence imposed in this case represents a necessary measure for the protection of our community and the young woman who was so brutally assaulted by the defendant."

The District Attorney's Office recognizes and thanks the agencies who conducted the investigation and assisted in the prosecution of this case, specifically the Tompkins County Sheriff's Department. Tompkins County Sheriff's Sergeant Marc Ninivaggi deserves special recognition for his life-saving actions as the first officer to arrive on the scene.