

White Gets 4 1/2 Years in Assault Case Family Determined To Clear His Name

By TRAVIS MITCHELL
Chronicle Staff Writer

A man who once managed a home for mentally handicapped people plea bargained and got a 4 1/2 year prison term on charges that he sexual assaulted a resident.

Michael Ray White, 30, plead guilty last week in Forsyth County Superior Court to two counts of sexual activity by a custodian. He was charged with second degree rape and second degree sexual offense in an assault on 23-year-old Charlotte Lynette Canty of Winston-Salem.

Canty was evaluated as having the mental capacity of a 4-year-old.

Based on the advice of his attorney, Walter Holton, White decided to accept a plea bargain from the prosecution.

The trial was in its second day when White decided to accept the plea bargain. Prosecutors said White could have been sentenced up to 95 years.

Superior Court Judge James Webb sentenced him to 4 1/2 years in prison and five years' probation.

The trial concerned an incident alleged to have occurred Sept. 13, 1991 at the Raven Ridge Group Home in Kernersville.

Carolyn Canty, Lynn's mother, said White had touched her daughter's breasts and forced her to have sex with him. Canty said she learned of the incident after picking Lynn up for the weekend.

Canty then took her daughter to

N.C. Baptist Hospital for an examination. A nurse, Janet H. Gordon, assisted in the initial examination. She testified that Canty was "very coherent, very willing, and able to answer questions" about the event. Canty used anatomically correct dolls to show that she was forced to have anal and vaginal sex.

Examination results produced no physical evidence, such as semen, pubic hair or blood, linking White to the assault. Also there was very little evidence of trauma, associated with sexual assault other than a broken hymen. Tests did not indicate when the hymen was broken.

The prosecution said Canty had bathed at least twice before the examination and they believed her attacker used a condom.

No one testified to have witnessed the assault.

But one employee, Monique Thompson, who was in the facility between 6 and 9 a.m. when the attack allegedly occurred, told officials that she was unaware of an attack during this time.

"No forensics evidence was found to link him to the case," said prosecuting attorney Charles Luckey of House & Blanco, who was participating in a special program set up by the D.A.'s office, which lets

private attorneys prosecute sexual offense cases.

"But if you had been in the courtroom and heard the nurse tell you what the victim told her about

certain things you would be influenced. In this case and any case there are a lot of questions you can ask. But part of a trial is the dynamic of human beings and how they talk to each other."

Luckey maintained that White had an opportunity to attack during the night because he also lived at the home.

Co-prosecutor, Mary Behan, said that they would have used past instances to attack White's credibility had he not accepted the plea bargain. Canty's attorneys said White worked at Su-Lynn Residential Home in Guilford County in 1988, where a resident alleged that he assaulted him.

"Its not a simplistic case involving one person saying one thing and another saying something different," said Holton. "You never know what a jury is going to do. They often reach a conclusion that we don't expect."

Canty's mother filed a lawsuit on Sept. 13, 1992 in Forsyth County Superior Court naming Forsyth-Stokes Mental Health, which operates Raven Ridge Group Home, Michael White, and some his supervisors as defendants in the suit claiming some \$10 million in damages.

White will remain in Forsyth County Jail until next week, when he will be transferred to Central Prison in Raleigh.

Furniture Market Boycott

However, the workers said that since being ordered in October 1991 by the National Labor Relations Board to enter into good faith bargaining, Hood officials have refused to negotiate.

This has continued to ignite a fire under the workers and community who held a rally earlier this month in Jackson, which drew 700 union, civil rights, and political officials from neighboring states.

According to workers, Hood is opposed to: a contract wage increase, currently paying an average of \$5; improving the employees health insurance; cooperation with the union on issues concerning

employees health and safety; making payroll deductions for union dues and credit union; and improvements in vacation and other benefits. The company is 95 percent African-American.

The workers from Mississippi were joined by a van filled with union workers, Local 276 of the IUE, from the La-Z-Boy plant in Florence, S.C. Union leaders there have been organized since 1971.

"We are in total support of the boycott of Hood Furniture Company," said John James, president of Local 276. "And we will assist them in trying to get a contract."

"We have a contract and that

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means job security," said Willie Walker, Jr.,

a Local 276 representative. "That is what the union is all about."

Mississippi union leaders say that they will continue their boycott efforts in other cities and states, next targeting specific buyers who encompass Hood's biggest accounts. They also are prepared to strike if the company does not return to the negotiating table with some strong offers.

"I don't think that we will have a strike," Weber said. "But if there is one, then striking workers will be permanently and legally replaced."

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resulted from sexual assault allegations that a Guilford County home resident had made.

Officials at Forsyth-Stokes

Mental Health Authority were unavailable for comment.

Canty is being represented by Bree Lorant of the Law Offices of

Grover McCain in Greensboro. Lorant said the Forsyth County agency has obtained the legal services of Womble, Carlyle, Sandrige

UNCF Achievement Award from page A1

cosmetics company based in Greensboro.

He is the owner of one of the largest minority-owned manufacturing firms in the Southeast.

Fulton is best known for his innovative creation of marketing pantyhose in egg shape containers. This idea gave the North Carolina native phenomenal success as well as the Sara Lee Corporation where he is president. He is also a supporter of the UNCF and is a mem-

ber of the Board of Trustees at Winston-Salem State University.

Angelou, the daughter of the late Vivian A. Baxter, presides over the UNCF statewide Special Gifts Drive. Under her leadership the organization has gained increasing community and statewide recognition and credibility.

In appreciation for the contributions of both Angelou and Baxter the UNCF has established the Maya Angelou/Vivian Baxter UNCF

Scholarship.

The award will be given to a North Carolina student, biannually who must attend one of the six North Carolina UNCF institutions.

The UNCF Schools are Barber-Scotia College in Concord, Bennett College in Greensboro, Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, Livingstone College in Salisbury, St. Augustine's College in Raleigh and Shaw University in Raleigh. All of the schools are located in N.C.

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