



Michael C. O'Malley
CUYAHOGA COUNTY PROSECUTOR

Lowell Harris Sentenced to Life in Prison for Murder of Girlfriend

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CLEVELAND — Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley announced that Lowell Harris was sentenced to Life in prison for the murder of his girlfriend, Holly Watkins. Harris, 62, lived with Watkins, 57, and her 21-year-old developmentally-disabled son at her Cleveland home near Hirst Ct and Emery Avenue.

“All law enforcement agencies involved in this case deserve praise,” said Prosecutor O'Malley. “The Northern Ohio Violent Fugitive Task Force for quickly tracking down this dangerous criminal, the Medical Examiner's Office for their analytical expertise in processing the crime, and Cleveland Police for their diligent work gathering evidence.”

On April 17th, 2018, the victim did not report for work at a nursing home in Cleveland's West Park neighborhood. The victim's son did report to work at the same nursing home. Coworkers questioned why his mother was not at work and he mentioned that he heard Harris and her arguing the night before and heard a gunshot. Two of the coworkers, one of which was the victim's nephew, left work and went to Watkins' home to check on her.

The family members found the victim in her bedroom where she was shot, discovering that the victim had suffered from a single gunshot wound to the neck and immediately called 911. Emergency personnel arrived and pronounced the victim deceased at the scene.

The investigation conducted by the Northern Ohio Violent Fugitive Task Force (NOVFTF), Cleveland Police, and the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office linked Harris to the crime. He was apprehended by the NOVFTF four days later at a friend's house in Columbia Station.

During the jury trial, Harris testified that the fatal gunshot wound was self-inflicted. Witnesses from the Medical Examiner's Office testified that the gun was shot approximately three feet away from the victim. Harris also testified that the gun was left at the crime scene. Testimony from law enforcement personnel stated that no gun or shell casings were recovered.

The Jury found Harris guilty of two counts of Murder with three and one-year firearm specifications, one count of Felonious Assault with three and one-year firearm specifications, and Having Weapons Under Disability, for a 1987 conviction of Sexual Battery. He was sentenced to Life in prison. He will be eligible for parole after serving 18 years.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant Prosecuting Attorneys Kristin Karkutt and Carson Strang.

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