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CUYAHOGA COUNTY PROSECUTOR

Serial Killer Samuel Pleads Guilty to 1984 and 1991 Murders; Receives Two Life Sentences

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, August 23rd, 2019

CLEVELAND – Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley announced that Samuel Little, 79, has pled guilty to the murders of two Cleveland women, Mary Jo Peyton, in 1984, and Rose Evans, in 1991. Little pled guilty to two counts of Aggravated Murder and was sentenced to two consecutive terms of Life imprisonment.

“Samuel Little made a career out of killing vulnerable women. His sinister actions were inflicted upon numerous victims throughout the country,” said Prosecutor O'Malley. “The diligent work of the FBI and our Special Investigations Division helped solved these cases.”

On October 1, 2018, the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office (CCPO) was informed by a member of the FBI's Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (ViCAP) of an ongoing investigation involving convicted serial killer Samuel Little. In 2013, Little was sentenced in California to Life in Prison for the murders of three women. In 2018, Little was extradited to Texas, where he pled guilty to a fourth murder, and received another Life sentence. While incarcerated in Texas State Prison, authorities in Texas were able to link Little to numerous other murders that included five Ohio women, three of which lived in the Cleveland area. Assistant Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Richard Bell and Investigator Jack Bornfeld traveled to Texas and secured a detailed confession from Little.

The investigation by CCPO's Cold Case Unit and Cleveland Bureau of the FBI learned that Little walked into a Cleveland bar one night located near E. 105th St. and Euclid Ave. between May and June 1984. While at the bar, Little met a 21-year-old woman named Mary Jo Peyton. After leaving the bar, Little drove her to what appeared to be an abandoned factory and strangled her to death. To avoid detection by law enforcement, he dragged her body out of the car and threw her down to the bottom of a basement stairwell. On July 3, 1984, two employees of a nearby business discovered her body.

On or about August 24, 1991, Little was driving in the area of E. 55th St. and Central Ave., when he met a 32-year-old woman named Rose Evans. Little offered her a ride but took her to a vacant lot near E. 39th St. and strangled her to death in his car. He concealed her body by covering her with two tires in the vacant lot. On the morning of August 24, 1991, a bystander walking by discovered the victim's body.

A third victim has not yet been found or identified. The case remains under investigation.

Over half of Little's suspected 93 murder victims across the United States have been confirmed by authorities. His killing spree spanned over 35 years in more than a dozen states, beginning in 1970 at 30-years-old and ending in 2005 at 65 years of age.

Little has been sentenced to serve multiple Life sentences without the possibility of parole and is currently incarcerated in California State Prison.

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