



Friday, May 21, 2021

Pro Se Cold Case Rapist Convicted of Raping Two Women, Sentenced to 35 Years in Prison

CLEVELAND – Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley announced that Basim Barnes, 35, has been convicted by a jury for raping two women near Cleveland's Westside in 2007 and 2009. He was sentenced following the guilty verdict to a prison term of 35 years.

"We continue to hunt and hold accountable individuals who have sexually assaulted citizens in our community," said Prosecutor O'Malley. "I pray that these victims can now feel a bit of security knowing their assailant will remain behind bars."

On October 19, 2007, Barnes forced the victim, 27, who was unknown to him, into his vehicle at a gas station before driving her to an abandoned house near West 44th Street and Lorain Avenue. Barnes pulled the victim out of his vehicle by her neck, put a gun to her head, and forced her to the back porch where he repeatedly raped her at knifepoint. Barnes then threatened to kill the victim if she moved and fled the scene. The victim was later taken to the hospital where a sexual assault kit was collected.

On February 2, 2009, the victim, 19, was walking near West 32nd Street and Lorain Avenue when Barnes pulled up, offered her a ride, and drove her to an alley near West 45th Street and Franklin Avenue. He pointed a gun at the victim, threatened to kill her, raped her, and stole her purse before driving away. The victim was later taken to the hospital where a sexual assault kit was collected.

In 2013, the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office (CCPO) assembled the Sexual Assault Kit Task Force (SAKTF)* to address investigative leads that resulted from the testing of previously unsubmitted rape kits primarily between 1993 to 2011. Both victims' rape kits were tested by the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) as part of the initiative. The offender's DNA from both victims' rape kits produced matches to Barnes, whose DNA was in the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) – the FBI's national DNA database – for prior crimes he committed.

A Cuyahoga County grand jury returned an indictment charging Barnes for both rapes in June 2016. Barnes was extradited from New Hampshire, where he was serving time in federal prison, in April 2017. The Public Defender's Office withdrew as counsel before Barnes fired multiple attorneys and ultimately represented himself at trial.

A Cuyahoga County jury returned a guilty verdict convicting him of the following charges:

- **Five counts of Rape**
- **Three counts of Kidnapping**
- **One count of Aggravated Robbery**
- **One count of Gross Sexual Imposition**



Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office

Michael C. O'Malley

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Barnes was sentenced to 35 years in prison. He also will be classified as a Tier-III Sex Offender, which requires him to register every 90 days for the rest of his life.

***CCPO SAKTF History**

Since its inception, the Task Force has completed 7,026 investigations that have resulted in 830 defendants indicted, the highest number of any SAKTF in the country. The number of indictments include 930 victims as several defendants are convicted or alleged serial offenders. Of those cases, the Task Force has secured a 93.3% conviction rate.

In October 2020, the CCPO SAKTF was awarded a \$1,000,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, which helped launch the office's G.O.L.D. Unit (Genetic Operations Linking DNA). The GOLD Unit's work includes expanding SAKTF investigations to include kits submitted from 2012 to 2019, genealogical testing of cold case sexual assaults and cold case sexually-motivated homicides, and continuing the Lawfully Owed DNA project.

The SAKTF is led by the CCPO and includes the Cleveland Police Department, Ohio BCI, Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Department, Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office, Case Western Reserve University, and the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center.