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## **Man Goes to Prison for Life After Jury Convicts of 2021 Stabbing Death**

On Wednesday, December 10, 2025, after a week-and-a-half-long trial, a New Hanover County jury found Gary Frink Sikes III, age 23, guilty of one count of First Degree Murder under the doctrine of premeditation and under the doctrine of felony murder. Judge Henry Stevens IV sentenced the defendant to the mandatory punishment of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

On November, 4th, concerned community members called in an abandoned vehicle left in an easement ditch behind houses in a neighborhood behind Ogden Park. A New Hanover County Sheriff's deputy investigating the owner of the vehicle found that it belonged to 84-year-old Edwin Taylor Boyer, a retired Ohio State University engineering professor who had always lived alone and valued his independence but who had recently moved to that neighborhood in order to be closer to his nephew's family. The deputy went to Mr. Boyer's house and found that a window screen had been removed after the screen had apparently been slashed with a knife in two places. Together with a second deputy, the responding officer then made entry through that same window and moved through the house, finally coming to Mr. Boyer's bedroom. Mr. Boyer's body was found in his bed, wearing bedclothes, with what a pathologist later reported were at least 33 wounds, the fatal ones being seven stab wounds clustered in the region of his throat and chest.

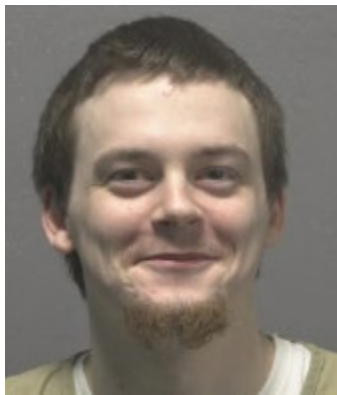
A chance encounter with law enforcement had occurred early that morning of the 4th when the defendant, Gary Sikes, was charged with passing a stopped school bus. The vehicle he was driving at the time was Mr. Boyer's, although the defendant had given the stopping officer a false account of how it was the defendant's girlfriend's uncle's car and how he (i.e., the defendant) was permitted to be driving it. Once law enforcement was aware of Mr. Boyer's death, and connected it with the earlier traffic stop, the defendant's residence—he was living with his girlfriend's family in that same neighborhood—was searched. Various items belonging to the victim—including a ring commemorating the victim's time as an auxiliary New Hampshire state highway patrolman—were found pursuant to that search. Also found was a knife with the victim's DNA on it. Additional evidence included the defendant's prints in the victim's residence, and the victim's DNA on the defendant's clothes. The defendant had also exchanged one of the victim's watches for cash at a local pawnshop on the afternoon of the 4th.

Sikes's identity as the perpetrator was never at issue thanks to the thorough investigation by the New Hanover County Sheriff's Office. The defendant ultimately took the stand to testify and could not dispute that he had stolen from and killed Mr. Boyer on the night in question. However, he claimed as a

substance abuser to not be able to remember key moments from the night. Much of this week's trial was therefore devoted to showing that Sikes had, at the time of the killing, the capacity to have a premeditated and deliberate intent to kill, which is a prerequisite for conviction of First Degree Murder under the laws of North Carolina and given the circumstances of this case. The jury returned its guilty verdict after less than an hour.

Mr. Boyer's niece, nephew, and their spouses were all present at sentencing. A fifth relative, Mr. Boyer's 91-year-old sister and his only sibling, provided a written victim impact statement since she could not travel from Florida. In it, she talked of the goodness and supportiveness of her beloved younger brother and of the painful and incomprehensible void that his murder has left in their family.

"You might think there are only so many ways to say that murder is wrong," said District Attorney Jason W. Smith. "But each family that we meet that has suffered the loss of a loved one through someone else's wrongdoing teaches us that every murder destroys a unique world. The people of New Hanover County have spoken and now Mr. Sikes will rightly be in prison for the rest of his life."



Gary Frink Sikes III