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JUDGE SENTENCES MAN TO LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE AFTER JURY CONVICTS DOMESTIC BATTERER FOR MURDER

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Charleston, S.C.— Solicitor Scarlett A. Wilson announced that the Honorable Roger M. Young Sr. sentenced Curtis Alan Smith to Life Without Parole following his convictions at trial for Murder, Possession of a Weapon During the commission of a Violent Crime and Destruction, Desecration or Removal of Human Remains. Solicitor Wilson stated, “We are grateful for the jury’s methodical deliberation and for the judge’s recognition that domestic abusers are a scourge on our community.”

The jury found Curtis Smith guilty shortly after 9pm on Friday April 4, 2025, after hearing four days of testimony. During the State’s case, witnesses testified that the victim, Jennifer Grant had been missing after last being seen at the Defendant’s house in the early morning hours of November 20, 2020. Jennifer Grant was 36 years old when she was murdered. She had had an on-and-off romantic relationship with the Defendant for about eight years. He was 65 years old at the time of the murder.

The investigation began as a missing person investigation. At trial, the jury was shown body camera footage and forensic evidence of the Defendant’s phone that demonstrated his lies to police and family members of the victim regarding the night she was last seen. North Charleston Police Department continued to investigate the missing person case until a vital tip came in from the Defendant’s wife, Antolene Smith. At trial, Mrs. Smith testified that she felt compelled to disclose what she knew to the police by her concern for the victim’s family, especially the victim’s mother, potentially never getting answers about where Jennifer was or what had happened to her. In disclosing what she knew to police, she also incriminated herself for having helped her husband cover-up the killing.

Mrs. Smith testified at trial that she had been separated from the Defendant during the time of the murder but had visited him the following Saturday. She reported that the Defendant was acting very strangely. Ultimately, he confessed to her that he had killed Jennifer, and she was buried in his back yard. Mrs. Smith testified that the night before Thanksgiving in 2020, almost a week after the murder, the Defendant removed the victim’s body from his yard and left her in his recycling bin, across Spruill Avenue from his house. The testimony from Ms. Smith was harrowing and appalling. What she told police also led them to corroborating evidence, and Jennifer Grant’s body.

At and around the crime scene, police found both blood evidence and evidence that the Defendant had used Clorox products to clean the crime scene and the murder weapon, in an attempt to cover up the crime. The pathologist testified that Jennifer Grant suffered at least ten stab wounds in addition to an injury to her forehead. She testified that it was possible that there were more injuries that were not apparent due to the level of decomposition her body had suffered before being discovered, covered in brush and surrounded by recyclable trash, on a set of train tracks near the defendant’s house.

At trial, the Defendant testified in his own Defense. He told the jury that Jennifer died in his home as the result of an accident that was brought about by him acting in self-defense. The story was not plausible, especially considering the Defendant lied throughout the investigation. Immediately before his arrest, the Defendant denied knowing what happened to Jennifer and vehemently denied that there had been any altercation between the two of them.

Assistant Solicitor Kelsey Davis and Chief Deputy Solicitor Jennifer Shealy prosecuted the case, assisted by Investigators Kristine Rivera, Jennifer Hall and Jon Glenn. The Defendant was represented by Mary Ford and Katherine Mangan of the Public Defender's Office. Assistant Solicitor Davis stated, "Justice was reached for Jennifer Grant through a dedicated team effort by North Charleston Police Department, special investigators and devoted family members who testified for the State. While the disturbing facts of this case are unique, the nightmare of domestic violence unfortunately is all too common." At sentencing, the family of Jennifer Grant thanked the Court for justice being served.

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