



City of New Bern Three Centuries of North Carolina Heritage

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WILMINGTON MAN CHARGED IN NEW BERN RAPE AND MURDER

The New Bern Police Department has charged a Wilmington man with the rape and murder of a New Bern woman. Andrew Bernard Adams, 55, of Cowan Street, Wilmington, was charged early Saturday morning in the 1977 rape and murder of Gwendolyn Antoinette Nelson, DOB 7/27/59, formerly of Eubanks Street, New Bern.

Adams was taken into custody after a standoff at a home on North 6th Street in Wilmington on Friday, January 13, 2012. The Wilmington Police Department charged Adams in the death of 24 year-old Latricia Ana Scott, found buried last week in a shallow grave in the backyard of the Cowan Street home where Adams was living. Scott was identified through an autopsy conducted Saturday morning. Her family had reported her missing Wednesday night, January 11th.

Gwendolyn Antoinette Nelson was found dead on June 29, 1977 near the cafeteria outside F.R. Danyus School on West Street in New Bern. An autopsy revealed the cause of death to be blunt force trauma to the head. Authorities immediately began an investigation into the case, but no strong leads developed and years later the case went cold. New Bern Police Department detectives began looking at the case again about five years ago, hoping to uncover some new leads. Recently, Adams was developed as a suspect and the New Bern Police Department began working with the district attorney's office and learned that Adams was residing in Wilmington. Members of the New Bern Police Department were conferring with Wilmington PD and SBI when this latest incident involving Adams occurred. Evidence has now been obtained that links Adams to the murder of Ms. Nelson.

"As a law enforcement officer, it's one of those things that you never forget," said New Bern Police Chief Toussaint Summers, Jr. "Cold cases haunt you. You know that was someone's relative and you want justice for the family. I commend our guys and the help of the Wilmington Police Department, the SBI, the U.S. Marshals, and the two district attorneys in cracking this case."

"I am pleased this 1977 cold case investigation has established sufficient evidence to prosecute Adams for the murder of Gwendolyn Nelson. The New Bern Police Department has worked hard on this case to identify a suspect and to prepare a case for prosecution," said District Attorney Scott Thomas. "The investigation included, in part, interviews of Ms. Nelson's associates from 1977, comparisons to other crimes for which Adams has been convicted of and served time in prison, recent DNA results and an interview of Adams conducted early Saturday morning after he was taken into custody on the Wilmington case. Further details about the investigation and charges cannot be released at this time

since the case is now pending in court. I will work with the district attorney in New Hanover County to coordinate our efforts as these two pending murder cases are prosecuted.”

Adams is charged with murder and first degree rape in the death of Gwendolyn Antoinette Nelson. He is a registered sex offender and according to state records has served many years in prison for various offenses. His most recent prison sentence was from 1979-2007 where he served time for sex offense convictions in Craven and New Hanover counties. His first court appearance was Tuesday in Wilmington, North Carolina.

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