

News Roundup

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As Charlottesville newspaper The Daily Progress [reports](#), late last week a Virginia jury convicted James Alex Fields Jr. of first-degree murder and several other charges arising from his attack on people gathered to protest a white supremacist rally in August of last year. On Tuesday, the jury recommended that Fields be sentenced to life in prison for the offenses. In a violent bookend to an already disturbing series of events in Charlottesville, Fields drove a car into a crowd of protesters, killing Heather Heyer and injuring dozens of others. Fields also faces federal hate crime charges, though a trial date for those charges has not yet been set. Keep reading for more news.

Charlottesville. In the immediate aftermath of the Charlottesville white supremacist rally, a report from VICE News correspondent Elle Reeve provided an [unfiltered look](#) at the rally and its participants. Earlier this year, Reeve reconnected with the central figures in the so called “alt-right” movement to see how they had fared in the year following Charlottesville. That report is available [here](#).

Aguilar. A few weeks ago, the News Roundup noted that the case of kidnapped teenager Hania Aguilar had taken a sad turn as she had been found dead. As WRAL [reports](#), authorities have arrested a suspect in the case, Michael Ray McLellan, and now questions have emerged about DNA evidence that reportedly linked McLellan to a 2016 sexual assault but that was not acted upon. According to the WRAL report, the state crime lab discovered in 2017 that DNA from a rape kit collected after the 2016 assault matched McLellan and sent that information to the Robeson County Sheriff’s Office and District Attorney’s Office. It appears that neither office made contact with McLellan thereafter. The WRAL report includes a lengthy interview with Robeson DA Luther Johnson Britt where he explains the procedure involved in situations where the crime lab identifies a DNA match and sends that information to local authorities.

Judges Retire. As the Burlington Times-News [reports](#), North Carolina Court of Appeals Judges Ann Marie Calabria and Richard A. Elmore will retire from the appellate bench at the end of this year. The report says that NC AOC Director Judge Marion R. Warren awarded Calabria and Elmore the Order of the Longleaf Pine on behalf of Governor Roy Cooper.

Mansion Raid. Last week the FBI [raided a mansion](#) in Raleigh and the couple who own the home have been accused of a wide variety of crimes ranging from money laundering to soliciting murder. Leonid and Tatyana Teyf are alleged to have operated a kickback scheme designed to defraud the Russian government out of millions of dollars and Leonid is also alleged to have plotted the murder of a man he suspected of having an affair with Tatyana.

Harnett Arrest Video. An arrest in Harnett County received significant attention this week when a deputy tackled a teenager who was recording the arrest on her cellphone. A WRAL [report](#) says that teenage sisters Jewelianna and Brie Urban began recording deputies who were responding to a complaint of drug activity involving a vehicle in which the sisters were passengers. The driver of the vehicle was charged with weapons offenses and the SBI is reviewing the interaction involving the Urbans.

Updates. Two week ago, the News Roundup [noted](#) that WRAL was running an investigative series entitled “Presumption of Fear” that examines the shooting death of Christian Griggs at the hands of his father-in-law Pat Chisenhall. [This week](#) a Harnett County civil jury found that Chisenhall was responsible for the wrongful death of Griggs.

Earlier this year, the News Roundup [noted](#) that Christian Gerald Desgroux had upstaged everyone else's Valentine's Day efforts by landing a helicopter at SAS headquarters while fraudulently claiming to be an Army general so that he could impress a woman. Desgroux recently was [arrested again](#), this time for impersonating a federal officer by calling 911 to falsely report that he was following a white van that was carrying a bomb.

Cohen & AMI. Michael Cohen was [sentenced](#) this week to three years in federal prison for campaign finance violations, tax evasion, and lying to Congress. The charges of lying to Congress are related to Cohen's deceptive statements about negotiations to build a Trump Tower in Moscow that occurred during the 2016 presidential campaign. The campaign finance charges arise from his involvement in paying two women to be silent regarding alleged affairs with President Donald Trump. Separately, as part of a non-prosecution and cooperation agreement, the tabloid publisher American Media Inc. [admitted](#) to buying one woman's story of an alleged affair with President Trump in order to suppress it ahead of the election.

Butina. Maria Butina, a Russian national who worked to persuade influential members of the N.R.A. and the Republican Party to adopt softer policy stances towards her country, [pleaded guilty](#) this week to conspiring to act as a foreign agent. Butina agreed to cooperate with federal investigators as part of the plea.