

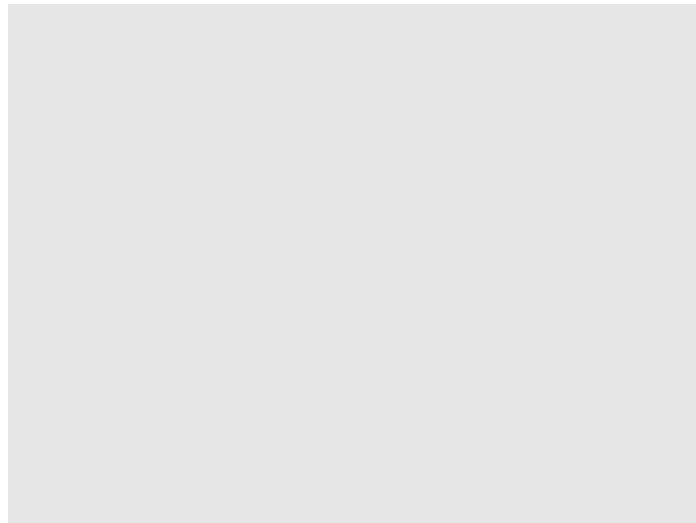
EDITOR'S PICK

## Richmond man gets life plus 66 years for 'horrific' surprise attack that wounded ex-girlfriend, killed man

By MARK BOWES Richmond Times-Dispatch

Nov 30, 2022

**A** Richmond man who broke into his ex-girlfriend's home and shot and stabbed her, leaving her for dead, while fatally shooting her new boyfriend was sentenced Monday to life behind bars for what a judge described as a horrific, unprovoked attack that was "sustained for a period of time." The woman survived to write a book about her ordeal.



Williams

Chesterfield police

**In sentencing Willie G. Williams III to life plus 66 years in prison**, Chesterfield Circuit Judge M. Duncan Minton Jr. made a significant upward departure from discretionary state sentencing guidelines in punishing Williams for the May 2, 2021, slaying of William A. Simpson IV and the wounding of Cerlisa Collins inside her Chesterfield home.

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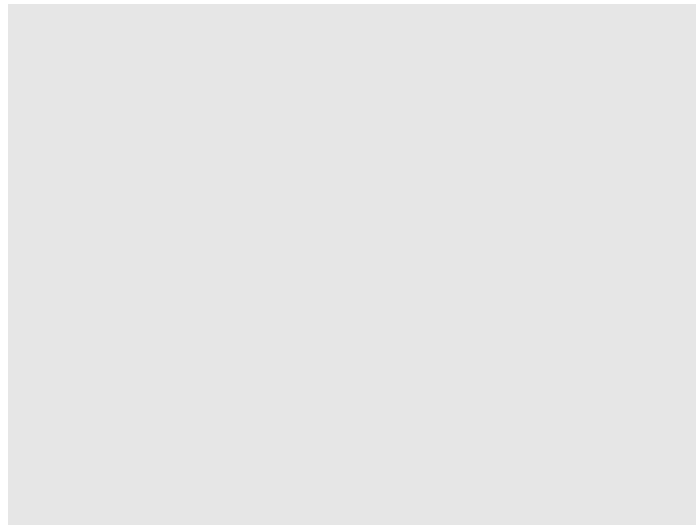
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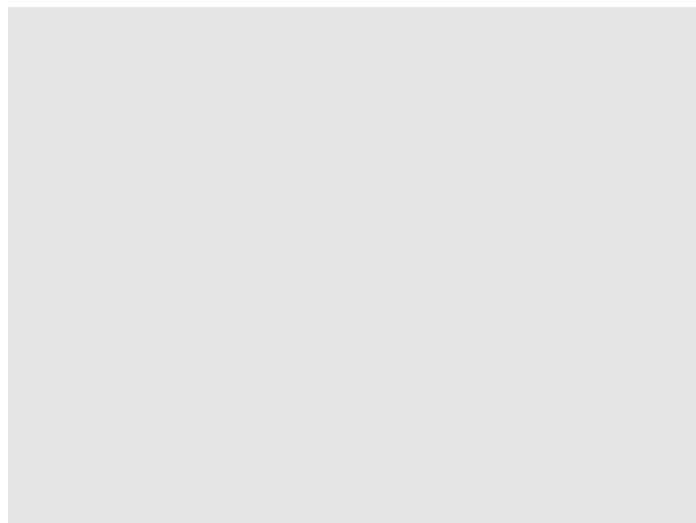
The guidelines calculated for Williams' earlier guilty pleas to murder, aggravated malicious wounding, two counts of felony use of a firearm and burglary called for an active prison term of between 44 years and 10 months at the low end and 74 years and 11 months at the high end.

When the judge imposed the life sentence, Williams attempted to overturn the defense table in anger but it was bolted to the floor and courtroom deputies quickly moved to restrain him.



Cerlissa Collins wrote a book, "I Will Survive," after she was shot multiple times and stabbed by her former boyfriend, Willie Williams III, in January 2021. Williams was sentenced Monday to life in prison plus 66 years. Williams fatally shot Collins' new boyfriend, William A. Simpson IV.

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William A. Simpson IV was killed by Willie G. Williams III on May 2, 2021.

Chesterfield police/family photo

In urging a life sentence for Williams, Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Bobbi Graves noted that at the time of the attack, Williams was free on bond after being charged with breaking into Collins' home in January 2021 and assaulting her.

According to a summary of evidence prepared by Graves, after a night out, Simpson and Collins returned to Collins' home in the 7800 block of Provincetown Drive about 1 a.m. to enjoy the night together as a couple.

Less than two hours later, at about 2:20 a.m., Williams climbed on top of a storage shed in the back of Collins' house and broke through a second-story bedroom window.

"He had been watching her residence, and I would argue plotting the attack, as was shown based on his cell phone data on April 29 and April 30 [2021]," the prosecutor said.

Williams waited until Simpson, 27, "was vulnerable and couldn't see him" before attacking Simpson after he entered the shower. Williams fired multiple shots through the closed shower curtain, striking Simpson in the chest, left abdomen, right leg, left buttocks, left calf, hand and left arm. Two of the shots punctured his lungs, stomach and kidneys.

"But the defendant didn't stop there," Graves said. Williams then began to beat Simpson in the head "with such force that it broke the gun." The firearm used in the killing and an extra magazine was later found under Simpson's body.

Williams also attacked Collins in the shower and she begged him to stop before he opened fire. She sustained a graze wound to her head and left side of her chest, a bullet wound to the right side of her neck, three gunshot wounds to her left thigh and another to her right thigh. She also suffered a compound fracture to her left arm.

Williams then dragged Collins from the shower by her hair before stabbing her, "breaking knives off inside" her body, the prosecutor said.

Collins tried calling for help after attempting to activate an alarm she had installed after Williams had broken into her home five months earlier. But it didn't work. "She somehow found the strength to go to a neighbor for help, and another neighbor hearing the attack called police," Graves said.

Williams fled the scene at 2:24 a.m. after hearing police sirens, the prosecutor said.

When the first officer arrived, he found Collins in the front yard "dazed, confused and bleeding out," Graves said. Upon viewing the bloody crime scene and the extent of Collins' injuries, the officer "went to get her dying declaration, believing that she, too, would not survive the attack," the prosecutor said.

"No one deserves to be brutally attacked and left for dead because they left an abusive relationship," Graves told the court. "And certainly no one should be killed for falling in love like William Simpson."

Simpson owned and operated with his twin brother a family car detailing and construction business.

Graves said Williams deserves no credit for pleading guilty, “as the credit goes to law enforcement for their quick response time, diligent efforts to collect evidence and apprehending a murderer.”

Collins is still suffering from the lingering effects of the attack, Graves said.

“She has nerve damage to one side of her face ... and she will permanently have problems with her eyes,” the prosecutor said. “She has a scar the entire length of her neck, and she has issues with her left arm from the compound fracture.”

Collins, an Old Dominion University student and small business owner, subsequently wrote a book about overcoming domestic violence, called “I Will Survive.”

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