

EDITOR'S PICK

## Spotsylvania man gets 13 years for role in wife's fatal overdose and molesting girl

Keith Epps

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**A** Spotsylvania County man who earlier this year provided the drugs that resulted in his wife's death and molested a 15-year-old girl was ordered Wednesday to serve 13 years in prison.

Ralph Daniel White, 46, was convicted in Spotsylvania Circuit Court of voluntary manslaughter, distributing illegal drugs as an accommodation, child abuse and two counts of aggravated sexual battery.

As part of a plea agreement, White was sentenced to a total of 50 years in prison, with all but 13 years suspended. The sentence exceeded the recommended state sentencing guidelines, which called for a maximum penalty of just under eight years to serve.

In court records, prosecutors Colleen Barlow and Crystal Montague-Holland wrote that White earned a sentence above the guidelines because he "set new standards for depravity" in causing his wife's overdose, molesting the girl and forcing the girl to use drugs.

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Barlow said prosecutors agreed to the deal in part to keep the girl from having to testify in front of a jury.

According to the evidence, deputies and rescue workers went to a county home on March 16 for a reported overdose. White led deputies to a downstairs bedroom, where his wife was on the floor, blue and not breathing.

Rescue workers used Narcan in an attempt to revive her, but could not. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

Deputies found evidence of drug use there, including syringes, a burnt spoon and a cut straw with powder. White told deputies that the last time he saw his wife responsive was about an hour earlier, when she injected him with heroin before injecting herself.

An autopsy showed that the victim had heroin, cocaine and fentanyl in her system.

Twelve days after the fatal overdose, the 15-year-old girl met with Detective Kelly Mills and told her that White made her go to a drug house and made her use drugs. Some of the drug runs occurred late on school nights, the girl said.

Court records state that on the night of the overdose she accompanied White on another drug run. After they returned, she fell asleep at the home where White lived, woke up later and saw White pacing back and forth whispering, “What do I do now?”

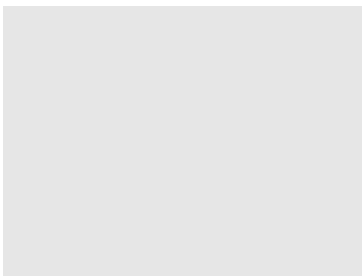
The girl said she went back to sleep because she was scared and woke back up when the deputies and paramedics arrived.

The girl also described to Mills several sexual assaults that took place in February and March. She said White blamed drugs for his actions.

The plea agreement states that White admitted taking the girl with him to buy drugs, but denied ever touching her inappropriately. But Mills recovered a text message in which White asked the girl to meet him in the bathroom and the girl responded that she did not want to. White then said he had “two more blasts” and ordered the girl to come do them with him.

The girl is in intensive treatment for sexual abuse and substance abuse addiction, court records show.

Attorney Anna Lindemann represented White.



**White**

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