

## Man gets nearly 16 years for chasing down a woman in his vehicle in Spotsylvania

Keith Epps

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**A** Spotsylvania County man who chased down a young woman in his vehicle after unsuccessfully trying to pick her up at convenience store last year was ordered Tuesday to serve just under 16 years in prison.

Ruebin Clifton Fletcher, 30, was sentenced in Spotsylvania Circuit Court to a total of 45 years and 11 months in prison, with all but 15 years and 11 months suspended. Judge Joseph Ellis' sentence was at the top of the recommended state sentencing guidelines.

Fletcher had previously been convicted of abduction, carjacking, attempted malicious wounding, felony destruction of property and assault.

According to the evidence presented by prosecutors Stephanie Fitzgerald and Ryan Mehaffey, the victim was at the Wawa at Cosner's Corner on U.S. 1 on July 17, 2018, when Fletcher confronted her. He offered her marijuana and repeatedly asked her to hang out with him.

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The woman declined his advances and eventually stopped responding to him altogether, according to testimony. After leaving the store, she noticed that Fletcher was following her.

The woman, who had come to Spotsylvania to visit a friend and was not familiar with the area, ended up in the 3600 block of Massaponax Church Road. Fletcher pulled in front of her and when she tried to back up and get away, her car got stuck in a ditch.

The victim was on the phone with a 911 operator by now, but was unable to tell the dispatcher where she was. Fletcher was banging on her window with what appeared to be a crowbar and was shouting such things as "get out of the car" and "follow me."

Fortunately for the woman, a vehicle with three occupants came by at that time and heard her screaming. Two men rushed to her aid as Fletcher drove away from the scene.

Police identified Fletcher from surveillance footage at the Wawa and took him into custody about a week later. He has been in jail ever since.

The victim and her parents testified Tuesday that the incident has been an emotional ordeal for the entire family. The victim called Fletcher a “monster who was prepared to do the unthinkable that night.”

“I feared for my life,” the victim said. “How could someone inflict that kind of fear on someone for absolutely no reason?”

Her mother described Fletcher’s actions as a “predator chasing his prey” and said that had it not been for the passersby, her daughter would have suffered a worse fate.

Paulette Brown, Fletcher’s mother, said her son has limited intelligence and didn’t realize the seriousness of his actions.

“He’s not violent. He’s a sweet kid,” Brown said. “He had no intention of hurting her, I know that.”

In their closing statements, both prosecutors referred to Fletcher’s lengthy criminal history, which includes a number of acts of violence, including a malicious wounding conviction in Fredericksburg that involved a woman being hit in the mouth with a brick.

Fletcher served more than six years in prison for that offense and had been out of prison for only 88 days when the Wawa incident took place.

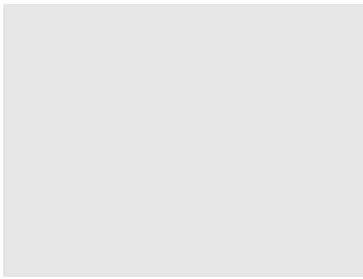
“This is a person who just can’t control himself,” Mehaffey said. “He just can’t behave.”

Defense attorney Bill Neely pointed out that most of Fletcher’s convictions are misdemeanors and asked for a sentence toward the lower end of the guidelines, about 10 years.

Neely, who managed to get Fletcher acquitted of charges of abduction with the intent to defile and attempted rape during his trial, tried to get the judge to reduce the carjacking charge Tuesday. That effort was unsuccessful.

In a brief statement just before he was sentenced, Fletcher insisted that the woman’s version of what happened wasn’t true. He then turned to the woman and apologized.

Fletcher is still facing probation violation charges in Fredericksburg, where he faces the possibility of the reinstatement of up to 20 years of previously suspended time.



Fletcher

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