



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on August 15, 2019

12 Years After the Christian-Newsom Murders, Fifth Defendant Finally Convicted

The families of Channon Christian and Christopher Newsom, the young couple whom five people, including one woman, brutally raped, tortured, and murdered in 2007, nearly finished their journey for justice this week.

[A jury in Knox County, Tennessee, convicted Eric Boyd, 46, of first-degree murder for his role in the savage crimes, which began with a car-jacking and ended with unspeakable sexual crimes, mutilations, and murder.](#)



Christian and Newsom were just 21 and 23 years old.

Boyd is the last of the five killers to be convicted.

The Crime, the Sentence

The bloody end of Christian's and Newsom's lives began when Boyd and [four others](#) — Vanessa Coleman, Letalvis Darnell "Rome" Cobbins, Lemaricus Devall "Slim" Davidson, and George Geovonni "Detroit" Thomas — carjacked, kidnapped, raped, and murdered them in Knoxville.

At a federal trial last year, the [Knoxville News Sentinel reported](#), a medical examiner detailed what Boyd and the others did to the couple:

Newsom was repeatedly raped and then blindfolded, gagged, arms and feet bound and his head covered. Barefoot, he was either led or dragged outside the house to a set of nearby railroad tracks, where a gun was placed to the back of his head and fired. He was shot twice more, once in the neck and once in the back. His body was then set afire....

Christian's death would come only after hours of sexual torture....

Christian suffered horrific injuries to her vagina, anus and mouth. She was not only raped but savaged with "an object." ... She was beaten in the head. Some type of chemical was poured down her throat, and her body, including her bleeding and battered genital area, likely scrubbed with the same solution — all while Christian was alive....

She was then "hog-tied," with curtains and strips of bedding, her face covered tightly with a small white trash bag and her body stashed inside five large trash bags before being placed inside a large trash can and covered with sheets....

Christian died slowly, suffocating.

The others confessed to being in the house at the time of the murders, but "all denied any active role in the crimes," the [newspaper reported](#). All were convicted, but only Davidson received a death sentence.

As for Boyd, testimony from two others and his pal, Thomas, convicted him on Tuesday. Thomas was looking at 127 years in prison, a sentence dialed back to 50 when he agreed to finger Boyd as one of the rapists and killers.



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“Prosecutors TaKisha Fitzgerald and Phil Morton staked their case against Boyd on testimony from three people — Adrienne Nicole Mathis, Xavier Jenkins and Thomas,” the [newspaper reported](#).

Mathis testified in Boyd’s federal trial that she loaned Boyd her white Pontiac Sunbird on the weekend of the slayings. Jenkins said he saw that Sunbird outside the Chipman Street house on the night of the kidnapping, and Thomas implicated Boyd in the couple’s kidnapping and Newsom’s slaying.

“Boyd was a part of it,” Fitzgerald told the jury. “I don’t care whose penis was in Ms. Christian. I don’t care whose penis was in Chris. They’re all responsible.”

Boyd will face two life sentences, the newspaper reported, and the judge must also decide how Boyd will be punished for the rape and kidnapping.

Sentencing is September 18.

After the verdicts, the [News Sentinel reported](#), Mary Newsom, Christopher’s mother, said she and her husband kept the promise they made when Boyd and his co-defendants raped and murdered the young man: “Twelve years ago, we made a promise to Chris that we would get whoever did this and today we got that. Justice was served.”

Not a Hate Crime

As with the [black-on-white Wichita Massacre](#), the national news media was reluctant to cover the murders because the perpetrators were black and the victims were white. A search of the *New York Times* website, for instance, [returned zero results](#) for “channon christian christopher newsom.”

But even more disturbing, police and prosecutors quickly dismissed the idea that the rapes and murders were hate crimes, as an op-ed in the [Chicago Tribune reported](#). “There is absolutely no proof of a hate crime,” said one official, because the murderers had white friends and dated whites.

Although Channon’s father agreed, Christopher’s mother didn’t, at least at the time. “If this wasn’t a hate crime, then I don’t know how you would define a hate crime,” she said. “It may have started out as a carjacking, but what it developed into was blacks hating whites. To do the things they did, they would have to hate them to do that.”

Image of Eric Boyd: [Screenshot of video from WBIR Channel 10](#)



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