

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



SHANNON WALLACE
District Attorney

Cherokee County Justice Center
90 North Street, Suite 390
Canton, GA 30114

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Cyndi Crossland
Public Information Officer
cbcrossland@cherokeega.com
770-479-1488

**Woodstock man sentenced to 40 years with 15 years to serve in prison,
after jury finds him guilty of family violence**
State vs. Raphael P. Fraga

February 18, 2022 – District Attorney Shannon Wallace announces that on February 2, 2022, a Cherokee County jury convicted Raphael P. Fraga, 40, of family violence aggravated assault, cruelty to children in the first degree, false imprisonment, and other charges. These charges stem from multiple incidents involving his girlfriend. Senior Judge Frank C. Mills, III presided over this trial.

“In many cases of domestic violence, including this one, victims of abuse are silenced by their abusers. Intimidation, fear, and isolation make them afraid to escape the cycle of violence,” said Damion Overstreet, who co-prosecuted the case for the State. “We will remain steadfast in our commitment to giving victims of abuse a voice and holding abusers accountable.”

In less than a month’s time, law enforcement was called three times to Fraga’s residence.

On December 18, 2020, Cherokee Sheriff’s Office deputies responded to a 911 call stating that Fraga had made a suicide threat in his Woodstock home. After Fraga was transported to the hospital, his girlfriend told deputies that Fraga earlier lit a notebook on fire and threw it on her while she was lying in a bed, burning a hole in her pants. Afterwards, Fraga sent her angry text messages, then went into a closet with a belt around his neck and closed the door. His girlfriend also reported that he had previously threatened murder/suicide. A teenager living in the home witnessed the incident and called 911. After an investigation, Fraga was charged with aggravated assault under the Family Violence Act, cruelty to children in the first degree, cruelty to children in the third degree, and harassing communications.

Nine days later, on December 27, 2020, CSO deputies returned to the same address. Fraga had taken his girlfriend’s cell phone while she was sleeping, then grabbed her and pulled her downstairs. Without her phone, she was unable to call 911 or communicate with her daughter, who was not home at the time. The child returned home to check on her mother and 911 was again called. The phone was later found hidden in the refrigerator. After an investigation, the defendant was arrested and charged with false imprisonment and criminal trespass. He was granted bond on December 30, 2020, with special conditions ordered to have no direct or indirect contact with the victims named in the case.

On January 14, 2021, the defendant posted bond then reunited with his girlfriend, violating the conditions of bond. Within hours, 911 dispatch received another report of domestic violence at the same home. When Cherokee

Sheriff's Office and Woodstock Police Department responded, Fraga was hiding in the next-door neighbor's attic. He was taken into custody following a brief standoff. Detectives determined that after again becoming angry with his girlfriend, Fraga slapped her face and strangled her. After this arrest, law enforcement became aware of a video taken earlier by the defendant, in which he brandished a knife towards her and the victim feared that if she tried to leave he would follow through on prior threats to kill her. Fraga was charged with aggravated assault under the Family Violence Act, false imprisonment, family violence battery, and violating a family violence order.

"In the space of eight months, this man did everything he could to isolate his girlfriend from people who cared about her. She was completely under his power and control and felt she had nowhere to turn and no way to escape," said Elliot Stone, who co-prosecuted the case for the State. "During one incident, he took a video of himself intimidating and threatening her as she sat on the floor, trapped. That video became a key piece of evidence in this case, providing the jury with a unique perspective of the abuse this victim endured at the hands of the defendant."

On February 9, 2022, Judge Mills sentenced the defendant to 40 years, with the first 15 years to be served in prison. When Fraga is released from prison, he must adhere to conditions of probation including receiving a mental health evaluation and treatment, completing a family violence intervention program, and having no contact with the victims and other named individuals.

"This sentence ensures that the woman abused by this defendant has the opportunity to heal from the physical and emotional abuse she suffered. She is no longer trapped, no longer under his control, and no longer helpless. Her pleas for help have been answered," said District Attorney Shannon Wallace. "And this cycle of violence has ended."

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence typically follows a pattern, with tension building, followed by a major act of violence, a calm period, and then cycling back to tension building. As time passes, the violent episodes often get more serious and may lead to a lethal act.

Strangulation is one of the most lethal forms of domestic violence even though injuries may appear to be mild or victims may have no visible marks. According to the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention, strangulation is the ultimate form of power and control in which the batterer asserts control over the victim's next breath. Odds for homicide increase substantially (75%) for victims who have been previously strangled.

If you or someone you know is impacted by domestic violence, please contact the Cherokee Family Violence Center, CFVC.org, 770-479-1703 (24/7 crisis hotline). In case of an emergency, call 911.

The Office of the District Attorney for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit is committed to seeking justice, acting with integrity, and collaborating with partner agencies in the criminal justice system in order to protect the citizens of Cherokee County and the State of Georgia.

###