



# BCPO News

**Scott A. Coffina, Prosecutor**



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## **Tabernacle Man Receives 30 Years for 2016 Lumberton Murder**

**MOUNT HOLLY, N.J.** – Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina announced that a Tabernacle man was sentenced to 30 years in New Jersey state prison for strangling a Lumberton Township woman inside her home in the summer of 2016.

Under the sentence handed down by the Hon. Terrence R. Cook, Pr.J.Cr., William Gennett, 55, must serve 85 percent of the term before becoming eligible for parole. BCPO Assistant Prosecutors Bob VanGilst and Courtney O'Brien had requested a life sentence.

Gennett was convicted in June of one count of Murder (First Degree) for the asphyxiation of Shannon O'Rourke, 45, inside of her Nassau Road residence on July 5, 2016. He also was convicted of one count of Stalking (Fourth Degree). Judge Cook sentenced him to 18 months on the Stalking conviction, to run concurrent to the Murder charge.

The investigation revealed that O'Rourke and Gennett were friends, and that Gennett was using a cell phone app to track her whereabouts without her knowledge. Assistant Prosecutors VanGilst and O'Brien argued during the trial that Gennett killed O'Rourke after she rejected his attempts to turn their friendship into a romantic relationship.

"This case exposed the self-centered, evil nature of William Gennett," Prosecutor Coffina said. "Shannon O'Rourke considered him a trusted friend, and helped him out in many ways, but that wasn't enough for him. He viciously took her life upon being rejected. Shannon's death has had a profound impact on her family, and hopefully having her killer behind bars for what likely will be the rest of his life will offer them some comfort."

The case was investigated by detectives from the Lumberton Township Police Department and the Burlington County Prosecutor's Office Crime Scene Unit, High-Tech Crimes Unit and Major Crimes Unit. BCPO Det. Andy Mikulski and Lumberton Det. Tom LaRosa, who is now employed by the Prosecutor's Office, were the lead investigators.

**END**

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