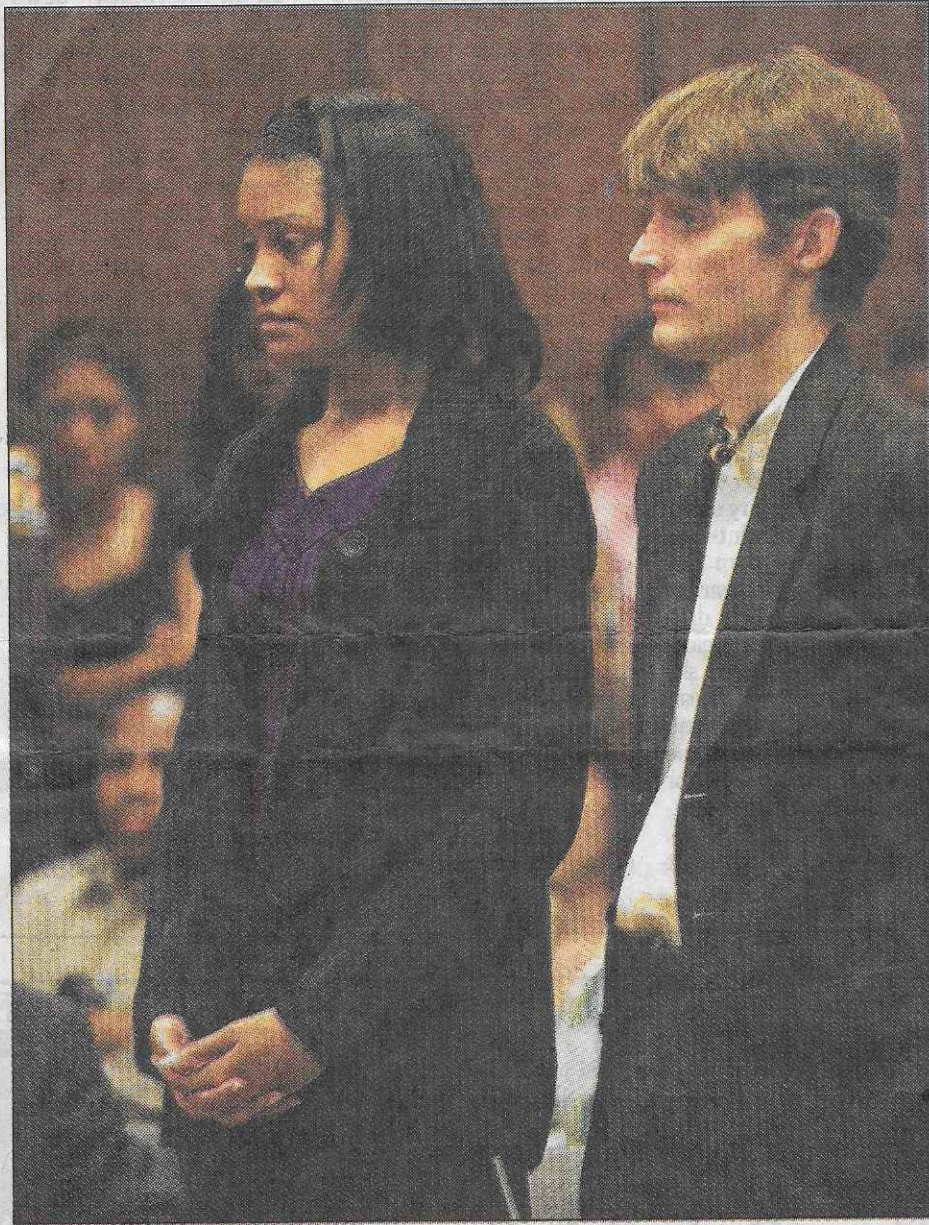


# Crawley convicted in killing, gets life



Shannon Elizabeth Crawley, left, stands with attorney C. Scott Holmes to hear Judge Ronald Stephens declare her sentence - life without parole - for murder.

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## Jury rejects efforts to blame man in love triangle

By JESSE JAMES DeCONTO  
STAFF WRITER

**DURHAM** - In a courthouse corridor swirling with television cameras, one family celebrated justice for its dead daughter. Another wept and cursed, helpless to rescue its daughter from life in prison.

The man in the middle of a deadly love triangle was nowhere to be found.

"Jermeir Stroud caused a perfect storm to happen and

walked away from it," said Superior Court Judge Ronald Stephens, after a 12-member jury found Stroud's former mistress, Shannon Crawley, guilty of killing his fiancée, Denita Smith.

As the prosecution told the story, and as jurors apparently believed it, Crawley tried over and over to frame Stroud for the murder of Smith, a graduate student at N.C. Central University,

in January 2007.

Four months after the murder, police say, Crawley concocted a story in which Stroud forced her to Durham then left her in her Ford Explorer as he climbed to the second floor of Smith's apartment building, argued with her, shot her in the back of the head, ran back to the vehicle, shoved his handgun into his

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waistband, then hid in the back seat as she drove away.

A year later, authorities say, Crawley recorded fake telephone conversations and tried to pass them off as Stroud confessing to her. When that didn't convince investigators, Crawley falsely accused Stroud of raping her in Charlotte a year and a half after the murder.

### Blaming Stroud

In an emotional interview outside the courtroom Monday, Crawley's father again pointed the finger at the man who patrols the streets of Greensboro as a police officer.

"If it's the last thing I ever do, I will prove that he is the one who committed this murder," said Keith Crawley, who with his wife sat for two weeks behind their daughter in a courtroom filled with loved ones seeking justice