

Media Statement



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TO: ALL MEDIA

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RE: COUPLE SENTENCED FOR CHILD ABUSE, RAPE AND MURDER

The High Court of South Africa: Western Cape Division sentenced Ameerodien Peters to life imprisonment and his girlfriend, Abigail Ruiters, to three years imprisonment after convicting them severally on charges which include child abuse, rape and murder.

The court convicted Peters of murder, rape and child abuse of his one year-old stepson, Jeremiah Suiters. The court sentenced him to life imprisonment for rape, 15 years for murder and 6 years for child abuse.

It ordered that the sentences run concurrently with the life sentence. Ruiters was convicted on charges of child abuse and sentenced to 6 years imprisonment with 3 years suspended for three years with conditions.

This case sent shockwaves as injuries suffered by the boy over a period were detailed in court during the trial. It started on the morning of 12 June 2017, when Peters ran into the local clinic with Jeremiah wrapped inside his track top.

He told nurses that the boy had climbed on a sofa, the table and then he fell off. The nurses administered first aid while waiting for paramedics, they arrived, but Jeremiah did not make it.

Prosecutor, Advocate Maria Marshall, called several witnesses who included caregivers, Jeremiah's grandmother, nurses and doctors who treated the boy at the Red Cross Children's Hospital. They all confirmed the abuse of the boy and the injuries

Dr Marna du Plessis, who conducted a post mortem on Jeremiah, provided a much clearer picture about the extent of abuse and the injuries. Led by Advocate Marshall, she testified that the boy had a total of 14 fractures to his ribcage. She described in detail all

the injuries to his head which, in her opinion, were caused by direct blunt force trauma and that a significant force was used to inflict such injuries.

“He had four areas of bleeding underneath his skin, three of which were fresh and on different parts of the head - on top, at the back of his head and on the right forehead. I noted one previous area of bleeding underneath the skin on left forehead, which was about seven days. He had also four extensive fresh fractures to his head. These injuries were not caused by a fall, they were caused by separate blows that were inflicted to the head. The ones on top fits in with a scenario where he was held by legs and dropped on his head.”

She added that he had fresh bleeding of the inside of his chest, fresh bleeding on the lining covering his heart. She also found extensive injuries to his abdomen and his intestines. In her opinion, this was due to a direct blow to the front of the tummy. “It was so severe that it caused the bruising to the intestines. He also had fresh bleeding around his kidneys, which was due to direct blunt force trauma. He also had fresh bleeding to his bladder also as a result of blunt force trauma.”

During the trial, the mother told the court that she didn't notice the injuries.

Dr Du Plessis dismissed that it would have been improbable for a caregiver or mother not to notice that the deceased was unwell as he would have been in pain and crying.

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