

# Media Statement



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**TO: ALL MEDIA**

**DATE: 07 NOVEMBER 2019**

**RE: ROBERTSON MAN SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR  
TERRORISING FARMING COMMUNITIES**

The Western Cape High Court sentenced Jeffrey Thompson to two life terms, 58 years and six months direct imprisonment this morning. The court handed the accused various sentences after convicting him on 15 charges which included assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, six counts of housebreaking with intent to steal and theft, housebreaking with intention to rob and robbery with aggravating circumstances, robbery with aggravating circumstances, attempted robbery with aggravating circumstances, and two counts of murder.

He received life imprisonment for each of the two murders and the court ordered that all the sentences run concurrently with the life sentences. It further declared him as unfit to possess a firearm. The accused terrorised the farming communities of Robertson, McGregor and Bonnievale when he committed a spree of serious violent crimes from September 2017, until his arrest on 16 December 2018.

It all started on the evening of September 2017 when he struck his girlfriend, Magdalene Willemien Simons, 31, with an empty beer bottle in the face, resulting in a serious open bleeding wound. Her only sin was enquiring about a R200 note she left in the home earlier. After that incident, the accused broke into several farmhouses stealing items worth thousands of rands. He was so daring in his crimes to an extent that at some properties, he would break in while owners were inside, threatened them with an axe and took their belongings.

On 7 September 2017, the accused was arrested but on 10 December 2018, a magistrate at the Robertson Magistrate's Court released him. Two days later, 12 December 2018, he entered the art studio of Elsie Sophia Wilhemina Steyn. He watched Steyn and her husband, Petrus Paul Steyn going about their business in the main house. He slept in

their bed in the art studio and he gained entry into the main property the following morning, 13 December 2018. He found the elderly couple asleep and without provocation, he hacked them with an axe. Elsie, 71, and Petrus, 64, died because of the axe wounds to the head. He took several valuable items from their house, packed them in their vehicle and drove off. The vehicle was found abandoned in another area of McGregor two days later. The accused was arrested on 16 December 2018.

Senior State Advocate Lenro Badenhorst told the court that the accused re-offended after he was handed a suspended sentence on 29 March 2017 following a conviction on two counts of assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm that were committed in McGregor. "He breached the conditions of the suspended sentence when he committed further offences involving serious violence. He committed the majority of the housebreakings at night or early in the morning in rural areas when there were no or few people around. He carefully planned his attack on Elsie and Petrus by watching them through the window in the art studio. Their three daughters and extended families are still severely traumatised by the horrific murders. The children are receiving trauma counselling while others are seeking psychological counselling."

The NPA welcomes the sentence as it indicates the institution's determination to fight gender based violence using all its available resources and capacity following the assault of Magdalene Willemien Simons. It also signifies the state's intention to protect farming communities and ensure that appropriate sentences are handed down to those who terrorise those communities.

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