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March 29, 2010

SPARTANBURG MAN RECEIVES 10 LIFE PRISON SENTENCES FOR CRIME SPREE

A career criminal received 10 life prison sentences without parole today after he admitted to breaking into nearly 20 local homes and stealing valuable property.

Dennis Paul Elliott, 52, of Spartanburg, pleaded guilty to 10 counts of first-degree burglary, 9 counts of second-degree burglary, 17 counts of grand larceny, 6 counts of petty larceny, 3 counts of obtaining property by false pretenses, 2 counts of receiving stolen goods, safecracking, forgery, attempted burglary, possession of burglary tools, malicious injury to personal property, assault and battery of a high and aggravated nature, failure to stop for a blue light and failure to stop for a blue light with great bodily injury. Circuit Judge Roger Couch issued consecutive life prison sentences on the first-degree burglary charges. He added a consecutive 10-year prison sentence for failure to stop with great bodily injury.

The defendant's prior criminal record spanned 25 years.

"Dennis Elliott's criminal career is over," Principal Deputy Solicitor Barry Barnette said. "He will no longer be a menace to society."

Spartanburg County sheriff's deputies arrested Elliott on Jan. 19, 2010 in the Boiling Springs community. Elliott escaped from the Polk County Detention Facility earlier in the day and used a stolen handgun to steal a getaway vehicle. Spartanburg deputies spotted Elliott a short time later and began a car chase that ended when Elliott collided with a vehicle driven by Melissa Springer at the intersection of Bible Church and McMillan roads. Springer and her three young children were taken to Spartanburg Regional Medical Center for treatment. A 6-month-old child was temporarily knocked unconscious in the wreck.

The defendant was also charged for a string of residential burglaries that mostly occurred on the northern end of the county during July and August of 2009. The stolen property included electronic equipments, jewelry, sports equipment, cash, guns, collectible coins and a safe that was later recovered in the Pacolet River. Elliott used a crow bar to beat one of his victims.

Elliott sold the stolen property to individuals and area businesses.

Three of the victims appeared in court today and asked Judge Couch to issue the maximum sentence.

For more information, contact Murray Glenn at 809-4892.

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