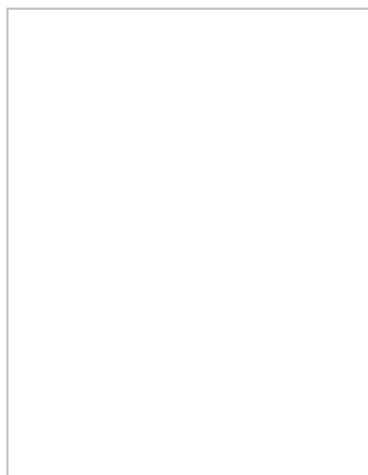


Former Shallotte officer pleads guilty to soliciting minor

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Braxton Rushawn
Strickland

A former Shallotte police officer was sentenced to more than three years in state prison after pleading guilty to a sex offense charge.

Braxton Rushawn Strickland, 26, of Shallotte, pleaded guilty Tuesday in Brunswick County Superior Court to solicitation to commit statutory rape, according to District Attorney Jon David. Senior Resident Superior Court Judge Ola Lewis sentenced Strickland to 44-113 months in the N.C. Department of Corrections.

State Bureau of Investigation agents investigated the case for several months before Strickland's indictment, David said. Strickland reportedly engaged in a consensual sexual relationship with a female victim who was between 14 and 16 years old at the time of the offense, which occurred in June 2012, according to court records.

Strickland was an officer with the Shallotte Police Department at the time of the incident, David said. He was indicted in October 2015 on two counts of statutory rape and one count of indecent liberties with a minor.

Strickland has been incarcerated at the New Hanover County Detention Facility since his October arrest just days after the indictments, David said. Assistant District Attorney Jamie Turnage prosecuted the case for the state. Attorney Dustin Sullivan represented Strickland in the case.

The district attorney's office consulted with the victim about the resolution of the case. The victim was present at Tuesday's plea hearing and in her victim impact statement asked the court to reconsider Strickland's active sentence and not require him to serve jail time, Turnage said.

"Justice in any case is based upon the facts of that particular case," Turnage said. "In this case, we had a

young victim who repeatedly asked not to be put through a trial. This result accomplishes a felony conviction, an active sentence, sex offender registration, satellite-based monitoring, the loss of Strickland's law enforcement certification and a ruling that the defendant have no contact with the victim."



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