



# SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

## SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR

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## Barberton Man Sentenced to LIFE IN PRISON for Rape

AKRON, Ohio (Tuesday, February 6, 2024) – Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh announced today that Summit County Common Pleas Court Judge Kathryn Michael sentenced Anthony Mignano, 30, of Wooster Road in Barberton, to LIFE IN PRISON for the rape of then 12-year-old Melanie Elkins.

Mignano will be eligible for parole after serving ten years in prison.

On January 11, 2024, Mignano pled no contest and was found guilty of the following charges:

- Three Counts of Rape – Felonies of the 1<sup>st</sup> Degree
- Three Counts of Gross Sexual Imposition Felonies of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree

Mignano moved in with Melanie and her father in the spring of 2022. Mignano admitted to having sex with Melanie three times.

The Summit County Prosecutor's Office typically does not name survivors of a sexual assault or abuse. However, the circumstances surrounding this case are unique. Melanie Elkins was found dead in June of 2023 in Minordy Place, an alley near South Arlington and Fifth Avenue in Akron. The Summit County Medical Examiner determined Elkins died from a combination of methamphetamine and fentanyl. The Akron Police Department is still investigating her death.

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“The death of Melanie Elkins has left an enormous impact on our community. Sending Anthony Mignano to prison for the rest of his life is one step in bringing justice to Melanie and her family. Once a suspect is charged in Melanie’s death, I assure you we will work hard to prosecute that person to the fullest extent of the law,” said Prosecutor Walsh.

Melanie’s father David Fast, sister Natalie Richter, and grandmother Rhonda Elkins, provided the following statement:

“Melanie’s story is far from over. She was a very sweet, caring, loving, and smart girl who loved playing video games and was interested in forensic science. Melanie’s memory will live on forever.”

On December 11, 2023, in a separate but related case, 31-year-old Keith Earley of Maxen Drive in Akron, was sentenced to nine months in prison after pleading guilty to the following charges:

- Gross Abuse of a Corpse – a Felony of the 5<sup>th</sup> Degree
- Failure to Report Knowledge of a Death – a Misdemeanor of the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree

An investigation determined Earley dumped Melanie Elkins’ body in the alley.