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Death penalty sought against Kenneth Rackemann in quadruple homicide

Rackemann accused of Feb. 20 robbery conspiracy and homicides on South Parker Ave.

(Indianapolis, Ind.) – Marion County Prosecutor Terry Curry announced today that his office has filed a request with the court to seek the death penalty against Kenneth Rackemann for the murders of Walter Burnell, Jacob Rodemich, Kristy Sanchez, and Hayley Navarro. The crimes occurred on February 20, 2014, in the 3400 block of South Parker Ave. near Beech Grove.

According to the probable cause affidavit filed in the case, four defendants are believed to have conspired to rob Walter Burnell and during the course of that robbery the victims were killed. Rackemann has been charged with four counts of Murder, four counts of Felony Murder, Robbery (Class A Felony), and Conspiracy to Commit Robbery (Class A Felony).

Established under Prosecutor Curry in 2011, a review committee within the Marion County Prosecutor's Office considers death penalty eligible cases to evaluate the circumstances. The most recent case in which the death penalty was sought in Marion County was in 2011 against Thomas Hardy. Hardy pleaded guilty to the murder of IMPD Officer David S. Moore and, pursuant to the plea agreement, is serving a sentence of life without parole.

Three aggravating circumstances are alleged against Rackemann in the request for the death penalty which are the involvement of multiple murders, the intentional killing of each victim while committing or attempting to commit the crime of Robbery by putting the victims in fear or by using or threatening the use of force, and that Rackemann was on parole for a prior felony conviction at the time of the offenses. *(Complete list of aggravating circumstances on page 2.)*

Three co-defendants are charged in the murders and have pending cases now before the court.

Anthony LaRussa: Charged with four counts of Felony Murder, Robbery (Class A Felony), and Conspiracy to Commit Robbery (Class A Felony).

Valencia Williams: Charged with one count of Murder, four counts of Felony Murder, Robbery (Class A Felony), and Conspiracy to Commit Robbery (Class A Felony).

Samantha Bradley: Charged with four counts of Felony Murder, Robbery (Class A Felony), and Conspiracy to Commit Robbery (Class A Felony).

The next hearing for all four defendants is scheduled for August 14 at 1:30 p.m. in Court 1.

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In the request for the death sentence, it is alleged the following aggravating circumstances existed at the time of Rackemann's offense:

- That Kenneth Rackemann did commit the murder of Walter Burnell as alleged in Count I of the Charging Information in this cause having committed another murder, specifically: the murder of Jacob Rodemich and/or Kristi Sanchez and/or Hayley Navarro, in violation of I.C. 35-20-2-9 (b) (8)

That Kenneth Rackemann did commit the murder of Jacob Rodemich as alleged in Count II of the Charging Information in this cause having committed another murder, specifically: the murder of Walter Burnell and/or Kristi Sanchez and/or Hayley Navarro, in violation of I.C. 35-20-2-9 (b) (8)

That Kenneth Rackemann did commit the murder of Kristi Sanchez as alleged in Count III of the Charging Information in this cause having committed another murder, specifically: the murder of Walter Burnell and/or Jacob Rodemich and/or Hayley Navarro, in violation of I.C. 35-20-2-9 (b) (8)

That Kenneth Rackemann did commit the murder of Hayley Navarro as alleged in Count IV of the Charging Information in this cause having committed another murder, specifically: the murder of Walter Burnell and/or Jacob Rodemich and/or Hayley Navarro, in violation of I.C. 35-20-2-9 (b) (8)

- That Kenneth Rackemann did intentionally kill Walter Burnell while committing or attempting to commit the crime of Robbery, which is to knowingly take property from the person or presence of Walter Burnell and/or Jacob Rodemich and/or Kristi Sanchez and/or Hayley Navarro by putting Walter Burnell in fear or by using or threatening the use of force on Walter Burnell, in violation of I.C. 35-50-2-9 (b) (1) (G)

That Kenneth Rackemann did intentionally kill Jacob Rodemich while committing or attempting to commit the crime of Robbery, which is to knowingly take property from the person or presence of Walter Burnell and/or Jacob Rodemich and/or Kristi Sanchez and/or Hayley Navarro by putting Jacob Rodemich in fear or by using or threatening the use of force on Jacob Rodemich, in violation of I.C. 35-50-2-9 (b) (1) (G)

That Kenneth Rackemann did intentionally kill Kristi Sanchez while committing or attempting to commit the crime of Robbery, which is to knowingly take property from the person or presence of Walter Burnell and/or Jacob Rodemich and/or Kristi Sanchez and/or Hayley Navarro by putting Kristi Sanchez in fear or by using or threatening the use of force on Kristi Sanchez, in violation of I.C. 35-50-2-9 (b) (1) (G)

That Kenneth Rackemann did intentionally kill Hayley Navarro while committing or attempting to commit the crime of Robbery, which is to knowingly take property from the person or presence of Walter Burnell and/or Jacob Rodemich and/or Kristi Sanchez and/or Hayley Navarro by putting Hayley Navarro in fear or by using or threatening the use of force on Hayley Navarro, in violation of I.C. 35-50-2-9 (b) (1) (G)

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- That Kenneth Rackemann did murder Walter Burnell at a time when Kenneth Rackemann was on parole for a prior felony conviction, specifically: Burglary in Marion County Superior Court, Criminal Division Courtroom #1, under cause number 49G011104FC023208, in violation of I.C. 35-50-2-9 (b) (D)

That Kenneth Rackemann did murder Jacob Rodemich at a time when Kenneth Rackemann was on parole for a prior felony conviction, specifically: Burglary in Marion County Superior Court, Criminal Division Courtroom #1, under cause number 49G011104FC023208, in violation of I.C. 35-50-2-9 (b) (D)

That Kenneth Rackemann did murder Kristi Sanchez at a time when Kenneth Rackemann was on parole for a prior felony conviction, specifically: Burglary in Marion County Superior Court, Criminal Division Courtroom #1, under cause number 49G011104FC023208, in violation of I.C. 35-50-2-9 (b) (D)

That Kenneth Rackemann did murder Hayley Navarro at a time when Kenneth Rackemann was on parole for a prior felony conviction, specifically: Burglary in Marion County Superior Court, Criminal Division Courtroom #1, under cause number 49G011104FC023208, in violation of I.C. 35-50-2-9 (b) (D)

A charge of a crime is merely an accusation, and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.