

ALTON COLEMAN HELD IN ILLINOIS BOND SET AT \$25 MILLION CASH

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CHICAGO -- Serial murder suspect **Alton Coleman** and his companion Debra Brown -- the subjects of a 53-day search in six Midwestern states -- were arrested in "short and sweet" fashion Friday in a suburban Chicago park.

U.S. Magistrate Carl Sussman set a \$25 million cash bond for **Coleman** and a \$20 million cash bond for Brown. **Coleman** 's bail was the highest ever set in Illinois, according to Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeremy Margolis.

A preliminary hearing for the two has been set for Friday.

MARGOLIS, in asking for the high bail, accused **Coleman** of "the single most horrible set of crimes that this branch of government has ever seen."

He said that six people were killed and at least 10 were brutally injured. "Many of these crimes," Margolis said, "involved young children who were stolen from their parents, beguiled and raped."

Margolis said Brown "is not viewed by the state as an unwilling partner in crime, or as a slave that was doing the bidding of **Alton Coleman** . She has demonstrated that she was . . . a willing partner who shared in this vicious crime spree."

When Brown walked into the courtroom, she was wearing blue prison coveralls and green slippers. While Margolis spoke, her head slumped lower and lower until her chin hit her chest.

Fred Foreman, state's attorney for Lake County in Waukegan, **Coleman** 's hometown, said FBI officials and prosecutors from Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio will meet next week to determine what charges to file against **Coleman** and which cases will be brought first. Foreman said he would seek the death penalty for **Coleman** .

COLEMAN , 28, and Brown, 21, both of Waukegan, were taken into custody shortly before noon after a phone tip from one of **Coleman** 's childhood friends, who told police he had seen the couple walking from downtown Evanston, said David Schram, acting Evanston police chief.

Schram said the arrest "was short and sweet. There was no struggle, even though he had a rather long, honed-down paring knife down his boot, and she had a five-shot .38-caliber pistol with a two-inch barrel."

Five officers arrested **Coleman** and Brown, who were sitting on bleachers across from basketball courts in Mason Park near Evanston's west side, Schram said.

Detective Susan Triguora, one of the arresting officers, said: "They certainly did not know who I was. I was in an unmarked car when I first drove by."

Coleman has been characterized by police and FBI agents as a gifted con man and conversationalist who has talked himself out of criminal charges. He apparently tried that again during his arrest Friday.

Triguora said **Coleman** got up and began walking away from the bleachers as the officers moved in to make the arrest. Patrolman Ron Grunnel, one of the other arresting officers, said **Coleman** "was laughing and joking" with police after they took him into custody.

"They tried to talk their way out of it like they'd apparently done in a couple of other instances," Schram said, "but we were pretty sure who we had."

COLEMAN HAD close-cropped hair -- unlike the Jheri-curl hairdo he was wearing when he became a fugitive -- and he gave several fictitious names to arresting officers, Schram said. Other than the haircut, **Coleman** had not changed his appearance, Schram said.

Police were watching for **Coleman**, Schram said, because he was known to have friends in Evanston. The town, home of Northwestern University, is just north of Chicago.

Coleman and Brown, charged initially with carrying concealed weapons, were positively identified through fingerprint checks, Schram said. After they were identified, the concealed weapons charges were dropped so **Coleman** and Brown could be prosecuted on the more serious federal charges, Schram said.

After being processed in Evanston, Schram said, **Coleman** and Brown were taken separately to Chicago.

Several hundred people crowded around the Evanston police station after the arrest, dispersing only after the two were taken away.

FOREMAN, who had prosecuted **Coleman** on charges he faced before he became a fugitive, said he looked "emaciated. I have never seen him that way before."

"There is no question he recognized me when I walked into the room," Foreman said. "He knew we'd been to court together before."

Foreman said he was "determined to get him back" for prosecution in the Waukegan area.

Coleman is wanted in at least six slayings and a string of kidnappings, assaults, robberies and car thefts in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Kentucky. Besides a list of federal charges, **Coleman** faces local charges in at least five states.

Friday, police said **Coleman** and his companion may also be a linked to a previously unreported murder in Zionsville, Ind., a suburb of Indianapolis.

Wayne Davis, special agent in charge of the Detroit FBI office, said Friday that his office is " . . . now reinterviewing victims and witnesses in the Detroit area to provide a more detailed overview of the actions of **Coleman** and Brown while they were here."

Caption: Photo

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