

COLEMAN GETS DEATH PENALTY IN OHIO KILLING

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Tuesday, May 7, 1985

Author: Associated Press and Free Press Staff

CINCINNATI -- **Alton Coleman**, who had begged a jury to spare his life, was sentenced Monday to die in the electric chair for the bludgeoning death last summer of an Ohio woman.

Hamilton County Common Pleas Judge Richard Niehaus set a Sept. 4 execution date for **Coleman**, who was convicted last week in the July 13 murder of Marlene Walters and the severe beating of her husband, Harry, both of Norwood.

Under Ohio law, the execution date will be delayed by an automatic appeal of the death sentence.

"The community cries out for justice," the judge told **Coleman**, who stood expressionless before the bench with his ankles and hands shackled. "Harry Walters and his family cry out for justice. Most of all, Mrs. Walters cries out for justice, and I shall impose it."

A NINTH-GRADE dropout, **Coleman** has been linked to eight slayings allegedly committed during a Midwestern crime spree last summer.

Coleman and his companion, Debra Brown, are suspected in several Michigan crimes in late June and early July, including the kidnapping of a Detroit woman, the beating and robbing of a Dearborn Heights couple and a Detroit couple, and the robbery of two Detroit men.

The jury that convicted **Coleman** needed little more than an hour of deliberation Friday to recommend the death penalty. The jury was not swayed by **Coleman**'s pleas and Brown's assertions that she was responsible for the killing of Mrs. Walters.

Niehaus had the option of accepting the jury's recommendation or choosing life imprisonment.

Coleman, 29, and Brown, 22, both of Waukegan, Ill., were tried separately and simultaneously for the attack on the Walters. Juries convicted both of aggravated murder, attempted aggravated murder, aggravated burglary and aggravated robbery, but Brown's jury decided she played a lesser role in the crime. She faces life imprisonment rather than the death penalty at a May 14 sentencing.

Brown, who considers herself **Coleman**'s wife, took the witness stand during **Coleman**'s trial and said he didn't kill Mrs. Walters. However, she also said then that she was on drugs and didn't remember anything about the attack.

With her trial decided Friday, Brown took the stand at **Coleman**'s sentencing hearing and said she had lied to the jury the first time.

Caption: Photo

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS

Page: 8A

Index Terms: ALTON COLEMAN; TRIAL ; SENTENCE ; DEATH ; REACTION ; DEBRA
BROWN

Dateline: CINCINNATI

Record Number: 8501180688

Copyright (c) 1985 Detroit Free Press