

## JURY CONVICTS COLEMAN OF AGGRAVATED MURDER

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Author: Associated Press

CINCINNATI -- (AP) -- A jury Wednesday convicted **Alton Coleman** of aggravated murder in the bludgeoning death of a woman last July during what authorities called a Midwestern crime spree.

The verdict included specifications that could bring **Coleman** a death sentence -- including the jury's conclusion that the crime was pre-meditated and that he was the "chief perpetrator."

The decision came less than 24 hours after another jury determined that **Coleman**'s companion, Debra Brown, was guilty but should not face the death penalty.

**Coleman**, 29, had called the lack of a death sentence in Brown's case the "best news in the world."

IN MICHIGAN, they are suspected of kidnapping a Detroit woman June 24, beating and robbing a Dearborn Heights couple June 28, robbing two Detroit men June 30, and robbing and beating a Detroit couple July 2.

Brown, 22, was convicted of aggravated murder, attempted aggravated murder, aggravated robbery and burglary in the slaying of Margaret Walters, 44, and the beating of her husband, Harry, 46, in the Cincinnati suburb of Norwood July 13.

The jury will make a recommendation on **Coleman**'s sentence after a hearing, and the final decision will be up to Judge Richard Niehaus. Brown could receive 20 years to life imprisonment at her sentencing, expected in about two weeks.

The jury in the **Coleman** trial began deliberating Tuesday after defense attorney Peter Rosenwald tried to convince jurors that Brown killed Margaret Walters, whose body was found in the basement of her home.

Brown's attorney had argued the opposite.

Brown and **Coleman**, both of Waukegan, Ill., had inquired about a camper for sale at the Walters' home.

Rosenwald conceded that **Coleman** struck Harry Walters with a wooden candle holder "not to kill him but to control him, to put him in a position to place handcuffs on him."

Rosenwald said Brown was to overpower Margaret Walters but couldn't handle the job and **Coleman** helped her drag Margaret Walters to the basement.

"Debra Brown lost it in the basement," Rosenwald said. "They were wounds made by a woman in rage."

**COLEMAN**, who helped defend himself, told the jury, "You know my life is on the line. You heard my wife from the witness stand tell you that I had nothing to do with it." He said he didn't hurt or kill Margaret Walters.

Brown and **Coleman** consider themselves married under common law.

Prosecutor Arthur Ney noted that in her testimony, Brown admitted being under the influence of drugs during the attack.

"A frail, 105-pound woman is going to take the blame for this man?" Ney asked, adding that he was shocked by the defense theory that Harry Walters was struck only to control him. "

**Coleman** struck that blow to kill him," he said.

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