

KILLER OF 4 KIDS DESERVES DEATH HIMSELF, JURORS SAY

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Author: SUZANNE SIEGEL Free Press Staff Writer

Jurors who found Detroitier **Reco Jones** guilty Monday of murdering four children and Jones' ex-girlfriend said he'd be a perfect death sentence candidate if Michigan allowed it.

"It's too bad we're not in Texas," said one juror who asked not to be named. "The Lord said in the Bible: 'An eye for an eye.' How can you kill a child? The worst thing a baby can do is say 'Gimme. Gimme.' A child can do nothing that makes them deserve to be killed."

Ericka Bellamy lost her children, 3-year-old Shafontah and 5-year-old Delvontay; her sister, Yolanda Bellamy, 24, and Bellamy's sons Nathan Burns Jr., 5, and Nathan Burns III, 3, in last summer's bloodbath.

She said she expects Jones, 23, will be slain in prison. That would please her, she said.

Bellamy, 22, who found the children lying in pools of blood when she peeked through a mail slot, unflinchingly declared Monday: "They're going to kill him in jail. People don't like people who kill kids."

Jones, who took the stand in a futile effort to pin the killings on one of his girlfriends, vacantly stared at the jurors as they read off their guilty votes one by one.

The foreman pulled off his glasses and wiped a tear away with the back of his hand.

Ivan Cannon, a friend of Nathan Burns Sr., father of the slain boys, said he searched Jones' face for a tear, a quivering lip, anything. "It would have eased the knots in my stomach if I would have found any type of remorse, but there was none to be found."

There was a swirl of emotion outside the Wayne County Circuit Court room after the first-degree murder verdict.

Prosecutor Kevin Simowski said, "This is far and away the worst, most tragic case I've dealt with in my 16 years. I'm satisfied now and I'm glad it's over."

Jones is the suspect who, after being arrested, went through the fifth-floor window of an interrogation room at police headquarters. He survived the 60-foot fall with a broken arm and leg and internal injuries.

Homicide investigators, police lab technicians and others who deal with death on a daily basis all described the massacre on Rutherford Street as the worst they'd ever seen.

The babies and Bellamy had all been slashed across the throat with a two-pronged knife. Some had been tortured with puncture wounds. All had bled to death. Some of the victims hung onto life for at least 15 minutes after they were stabbed. One child ran around the house in a frenzy, officials surmised, because his tiny white socks were drenched in blood. A dying Bellamy, clutching her youngest son, probably watched Jones torture the little girl before she succumbed to her own 11 stab wounds.

The jurors -- nine women and three men -- were allowed to look at only the least graphic photos of the crime scene. They deliberated just over three hours after two weeks of testimony.

One 39-year-old juror, who asked to be identified only as Laurie, said she never wants to be on another jury.

"I had nightmares," she said abruptly.

Jurors said they immediately agreed Jones was guilty, but there was some haggling over whether Yolanda Bellamy's death was first- or second-degree murder. They decided on first, a premeditated act that carries a sentence of mandatory life without parole. Juror Laurie said there was no question that the deaths of the children constituted first-degree murder.

Jurors tried to understand why Jones killed so violently. According to prosecutors, after Bellamy lied to Jones in saying she was pregnant with his baby and planned to abort it, he attacked her; the children were sacrificed because they knew him.

Nathan Burns Sr., the father of Yolanda Bellamy's slaughtered sons, was teary and jubilant.

"I call this true justice," the 23-year-old trucker said. "Today, I'm proud to be an American."

Jones will be sentenced April 17 in Judge Kym Worthy's courtroom.

Suzanne Siegel can be reached at 1-313-222-6672 or by E-mail at siegel@det-freepress.com

Caption: Photo ANDREW JOHNSTON/Detroit Free Press

Nathan Burns Sr., left, father of two slain boys, hugs his brother, Virgil Sneed, and a friend after the guilty verdict Monday in Wayne County Circuit Court in Detroit. **Reco Jones** was convicted of the first-degree murder of the boys, their mother and two other children. His sentence will be life in prison. Police said the massacre was the worst they've ever seen. Jones showed no emotion at the verdict.

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