

REPRIEVE OF DEBRA BROWN OPPOSED

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Wednesday, January 30, 1991

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The death row reprieve of Debra Brown and seven other condemned prisoners by former Ohio Gov. Richard Celeste violated state law, Ohio Attorney General Lee Fisher said in an opinion issued Tuesday.

Authorities chased Brown and companion **Alton Coleman** across five states during a spree of murder, sexual assault, robberies and beatings in summer 1984. They were captured in a suburban Chicago park. Eight killings were blamed on them.

The couple were charged with robbery, kidnapping and assault in Detroit but were never tried.

Fisher filed a complaint in Franklin County Common Pleas Court to overturn some of the last-minute pardons and commutations granted by Celeste as he left office two weeks ago.

In some of the cases, Celeste, an opponent of capital punishment, failed to file applications with the Adult Parole Authority asking for an investigation and recommendation, Fisher said. In other cases, he said, Celeste acted before getting a recommendation.

Brown, 27, was convicted of murder and robbery in the slaying of a 15-year-old Cincinnati girl.

Celeste commuted Brown's death sentence to life in prison without parole, citing experts who said she acted under duress in a master-slave relationship with **Coleman**. He also said a staff report showed Brown is mentally handicapped, with an IQ somewhere between 59 and 74.

Coleman was convicted of four murders and is under death sentences in Ohio, Indiana and Illinois.

Caption: Photo

Alton Coleman, far left, and Debra Brown were charged with robbery, kidnapping and assault in Detroit but were never tried.

Edition: METRO EDITION

Section: NWS

Page: 2B

Index Terms: COURT ; CHANGE ; CONTROVERSY ; DEBRA BROWN ; ALTON COLEMAN

Record Number: 9101050383

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