

## PONTIAC: WOMAN FORGIVES SISTER'S KILLER

Detroit Free Press (MI) - Thursday, January 10, 2008

Author: L.L. BRASIER, FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

A grieving woman pledged forgiveness to the man who shot and killed her sister and burned her tiny niece to death, saying she and her family would find strength in God.

"I will say that Markeda Byas and Arctavia **Reed** will not be remembered as this man left them that terrible day, but will live protected in our hearts forever," Michilliah Byas told a courtroom filled with quietly sobbing people.

The convicted killer, **Jimmie Reed Jr .**, stood shackled and impassive in Oakland County Circuit Court, awaiting his sentencing to life in prison Wednesday.

"On behalf of the Byas family, we forgive this man, because through forgiveness we can go on with our lives and leave his horrific deeds behind us," Michilliah Byas said.

**Reed** , 31, a factory worker living in Detroit, killed Byas, 30, his sometime girlfriend in July 2006, shooting her in the head as she lay sleeping with their newborn daughter, Arctavia, in their Pontiac apartment.

Police said **Reed** had a child from another woman, and had impregnated a third, and did not want to pay support for Arctavia.

After shooting Byas, he left to take his pregnant girlfriend to an appointment, went to work, then returned to Byas' apartment, where Arctavia lay screaming next to her dead mother.

He doused the bed with gasoline and lit a match. He would later tell police he heard the baby screaming as he left.

In November, **Reed** was convicted of first-degree murder, a crime that carries a mandatory life sentence without parole. He can be freed only by a governor.

Wednesday, in sending **Reed** to prison, Oakland County Circuit Judge Fred Mester recalled the infant's pain.

"We're all going to hear those cries because that baby could have been saved," Mester said.

"There is nothing more precious than life, the birth of a child, and we should all thrill at that because it gives us hope for tomorrow."

**Reed** , who confessed to the killings, declined to speak, shaking his head when Mester asked for his comments.

Outside, the courtroom, Michilliah Byas said her family was relieved to see **Reed** behind bars for the rest of his life.

"But we had hoped he would at least apologize for what he had done," she said.

ILLUSTRATION: Photo

CAPTION:

Byas family

Markeda Byas and daughter Arctavia **Reed** were killed in July 2006.

CAPTIONWRITER: **Jimmie Reed Jr** . got life in prison.

DISCLAIMER: THIS ELECTRONIC VERSION MAY DIFFER SLIGHTLY FROM THE  
PRINTED ARTICLE

Edition: METRO FINAL

Section: NWS; NEWS

Page: 5B

Index Terms: homicide; Markeda Byas; Arctavia Reed ; court; Jimmie Reed Jr .; sentence

Record Number: dfp0000526487

Copyright (c) Detroit Free Press. All rights reserved. Reproduced with the permission of Gannett Co., Inc. by NewsBank, inc.