

CAN WE SPEED UP WHEELS OF JUSTICE \ DAUGHTER DIES, 'JUSTICE' DRAGS

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It's been almost two years since Virginia Jones lost her only child in a crime that county Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson said was so brutal it called for the the death penalty.

Almost two years, and Virginia Jones is still waiting for justice.

"It's like she lived 20 years for nothing," Jones said of her daughter Evette, who was shot six times and left in the trunk of a stolen car in Southfield. "I thought justice was justice. I assumed the law was the law. I thought, if you do right, you'll be OK. If not, you'll be punished. This is just unbelievable."

IT WAS ONLY LAST WEEK that a trial date of Jan. 27, 1986, was set for the second man accused in **Evette Jones'** death. The first man's trial ended with a conviction, but the second trial has been delayed by legal maneuvers that fill a computer printout 27 inches long.

"The prosecutor says, 'This is the law. This is our system' . . . Where's 'The System' for the victim?" Jones said. "I've been voting since I'm 21 and I never voted for this."

Assistant County Prosecutor Michael Modelski said much of the delay has been because defendants Rex Love and David Hudson requested separate trials for murder charges stemming from the fatal shootings of Jones in Southfield and another woman in Detroit earlier the same night.

More delays in the only remaining trial were caused by disagreements between Hudson and his court-appointed attorney, Modelski said.

"The last time the case was called in for trial, the defense asked for a continuance so an independent expert could examine (Hudson) to concoct an insanity defense that he was high on drugs at the time," Modelski said. "A defendant is entitled to do what he can. . . . Since he's indigent, the county paid for it."

"The biggest problem is the defendant has all these wonderful rights," Modelski said. "He's already convicted of first-degree murder in Detroit. This guy has nothing to lose by screwing around. Our office has been ready to go to trial all along."

EVETTE JONES, of northwest Detroit, was six days short of her 20th birthday when she was abducted and shot on Jan. 28, 1984. She died 12 days later at Providence Hospital.

According to police, the two Detroit men accused in the killing were driving a car stolen from Ruth Wilson, 50, a woman they had killed earlier in Detroit. Wilson's body was found in an alley near her home.

The pair staged a small traffic accident, bumping Jones' car with Wilson's stolen car, then forced her into the trunk of Wilson's car and drove her to Southfield, where she was shot and abandoned at Pierce and Mt. Vernon streets.

Afterward, according to investigators and court records, the pair -- Love, then 22, and Hudson, then 26 -- returned home to eat pizza, lift weights and watch television.

They were arrested by police who traced their footsteps in snow from a stolen car to a home on Detroit's west side.

Patterson said the senseless murders were "particularly cold- blooded crimes" and said the Southfield case was "an execution, pure and simple," that warranted the death penalty.

VIRTUALLY EVERY DAY since Evette's shooting, Virginia Jones, 45, and her husband, Everett, 48, co-owner of a Detroit insurance firm, have talked with police and prosecutors, sought crime victim counseling, sat in court and prayed.

Their desire is simple. They want both men charged with killing their daughter to be convicted and sent to prison for the rest of their lives. But the system works slowly and is designed to safeguard the rights of the accused.

Both men were tried in Detroit Recorder's Court, convicted and sentenced to life in prison without parole for the Wilson murder.

Love was tried in Oakland County and convicted May 22 of the Jones murder. But Hudson has used an attorney appointed for him through Oakland County Circuit Court to delay his second murder trial.

"Hudson's family keeps saying he's a good boy who hasn't been in any trouble before," Mrs. Jones said. "By the time they come up to trial, no one will remember my child."

She said the frustration of dealing with "the system" has driven her to the edge of a nervous breakdown.

"I don't understand why he (Hudson) has so many options and I don't have any," Jones said.

SINCE their daughter's murder, the Jones family has been rocked again and again by violent crime.

Less than a year after Evette's death, the Joneses' godson, Bobby Eugene Farris, a soldier stationed at Ft. Campbell, Ky., was killed in a still unsolved murder.

Shynita Cotton, 21, a friend of Evette's who was a flower girl at Farris' funeral, was killed as she sat on her front porch, apparently the innocent victim of an errant bullet intended for someone else.

A burglar took jewelry and Girl Scout funds from the Joneses' northwest Detroit home. And a neighbor was dragged to a nearby garage and raped while her husband and three children sat unaware inside their home.

"The Bible is fulfilling itself," Virginia Jones said. "The world is corrupt. I don't know if I can take too much more. I've been threatening a nervous breakdown. Everybody can't move to Southfield or Livonia or Dearborn. What are we supposed to do?"

"Everybody's got his rights and damn who's dead," she said. "I want to know who put up the system. I want to know how we change it."

Caption: Photo JOHN SOBCZAK

Memo: ALSO RAN IN OAKLAND CENTRAL AND SOUTH ZONES

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