

## GUILTY VERDICT IN FIREBOMB SLAYINGS

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Frank Colon was convicted Thursday of four counts of first-degree **murder** for the August firebombing deaths of four sleeping teenagers on Detroit's southwest side.

A Recorder's Court jury of five **men** and seven women needed only two hours to reach their verdict after a 3-week trial before Judge Richard Hathaway.

Colon, 28, showed no emotion when the verdict was announced. But Raymundo and Rosario Alva -- parents of three of the victims -- squeezed each others' hands every time the jury foreman announced "guilty."

DEFENSE attorney Charles Campbell complimented Assistant Prosecutor Robert Monk for his "great victory" **in** a hard-fought courtroom battle. But a grim-faced Monk said: "This is not a great victory. I'm just sorry that people should be killing other people."

Colon, also convicted of one count of arson, faces mandatory life **in** prison without parole; he can be freed only by a governor's pardon. Hathaway set sentencing for June 9.

Colon and two other **men** -- Pedro Medina, 23, and Louis Cabrera, 28 -- were accused of firebombing the Alvas' Morrell Street home last August as part of long-standing feud between the Alvas and Medina.

Killed **in** the blaze were Maria Alva, 15, and her brothers, Alicia, 19, and Jerry, 18. Also killed was Tanya Valdez, 15, a friend of Maria's.

THE FEUD started over the fatal 1980 stabbing of Tony Alva, an uncle of the three firebombing victims, by Colon -- a killing that was ruled self-defense. There were skirmishes between the two factions **in** the week before the bombing, and Medina claimed his house was twice attacked by the Alvas just before the bombing.

According to police and Fire Department arson investigators, four gasoline-filled bottles were thrown into the Alva house.

Cabrera, **charged** with first-degree **murder**, was convicted of manslaughter and arson two months ago by a jury. Judge Justin Ravitz sentenced him to 6-20 years. Medina accepted an offer from the Prosecutor's Office and pleaded guilty to second-degree **murder** before Judge David Kerwin. He was sentenced to 15-25 years **in** exchange for a promise to testify for the prosecution if necessary.

Colon originally accepted the same offer from Kerwin, but unexpectedly withdrew his guilty plea on the sentencing date. Kerwin, who disqualified himself from hearing the trial, told Colon he hoped a jury would convict him.

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