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CUYAHOGA COUNTY PROSECUTOR

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**Jury Recommends Death Penalty for Matthew Nicholson
for the Aggravated Murder of Two Teenagers**

CLEVELAND – Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael C. O'Malley announced that a Jury recommended the Death Penalty for Matthew Nicholson, 30, for the murders of 17-year-old Manuel Lopez and 19-year-old Giselle Lopez.

"The heinous facts in this case led us to seek the death penalty. With this result, it is clear the Jurors agreed with our decision," said Prosecutor O'Malley. "Our thoughts and prayers remain with the family of the teenage victims."

On October 11, 2019, the Jury found Nicholson guilty of the Aggravated Murder of the two teenagers and Attempted Felonious Assault on their mother. The Jury's guilty verdict of Aggravated Murder included Course of Conduct specifications, indicating that the crime was part of a course of conduct involving the purposeful killing two or more persons. This specification is one of the qualifying aggravating factors for the death penalty. As a result, the case proceeded to today's Sentencing Phase or "Mitigation Phase". The Judge will consider the Jury's recommendation for the Death Penalty when he imposes sentencing at 12:30pm on November 13, 2019.

On September 5, 2018, Nicholson got off work and drove to a house owned by his girlfriend, 44, near E. 86th St. and Garfield Blvd. in Garfield Heights. Nicholson argued with her about a previous relationship and attacked her in a bedroom, strangling her and striking her in the face multiple times. The victim's 17-year-old son intervened to stop the attack and a struggle ensued between him and Nicholson. After his mother separated them, he called police while Nicholson retrieved a handgun.

The victim's 19-year-old daughter had returned home from work and entered the house. When the victim instructed her children to run outside, Nicholson fired 13 shots at them. Both suffered multiple gunshot wounds in the back. The victim ran to a neighbor's house and Garfield Heights Police arrived on scene. The 17-year-old male victim died at the scene and the 19-year-old female victim was transported to the hospital, where she underwent emergency surgery, and was pronounced deceased shortly thereafter. Nicholson was arrested after a 4-hour standoff with the Southeast Area Law Enforcement (SEAL) Swat Team.

The investigation conducted by Garfield Heights Police, Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office, and the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation revealed that Nicholson had shot both victims in the back-- Manuel Lopez eight (8) times and Giselle Lopez four (4) times--as they were attempting to run away from him.

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