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Jury Verdict: Guilty of Killing Two Teenagers and Assaulting Their Mother

Jury's Decision Makes Matthew Nicholson Eligible for Death Penalty

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

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 next phase of the case is the Sentencing Phase or "Mitigation Phase" which is scheduled for Tuesday, October 15 at 9am.

"Nicholson senselessly killed two young teenagers who had their entire lives ahead of them," said Prosecutor O'Malley. "His claim that he was the victim in this case was a feeble attempt to deny responsibility."

The Jury found Nicholson guilty of the following charges:

- 2 counts of Aggravated Murder
- 2 counts of Murder
- 2 counts of Felonious Assault
- 1 count of Attempted Felonious Assault

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-- Manual Lopez eight (8) times and Giselle Lopez four (4) times--as they were attempting to run away from him.

The State called 40 witnesses during trial. Jury selection began September 16, 2019. Closing arguments were given October 9th. The Jury deliberated for a day and half.

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