



MICHAEL C. O'MALLEY
CUYAHOGA COUNTY PROSECUTOR

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**Matthew Nicholson Sentenced to Death for the
Aggravated Murder of Two Garfield Heights Teenagers**

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

"There can be no greater form of abuse than killing someone's children in front of them," said Prosecutor O'Malley. "Matthew Nicholson is a monster for his barbaric actions and received the sentence he rightly deserved. He was unremorseful to the very end."

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 of two or more persons. This specification is one of the qualifying aggravating factors for the death penalty. As a result, the case proceeded to the trial's Sentencing Phase or "Mitigation Phase." On October 18, 2019, the Jury found that the aggravating factors outweighed the mitigating factors and recommended that the death penalty should be imposed.

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.

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