

Killer should die, jury says - A Georgia man was arrested 9 years after a Daytona Beach woman was slain.

Orlando Sentinel, The (FL) - March 27, 2008

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DAYTONA BEACH -- Gregory Earl Murphy nearly got away with murder.

But almost 11 years after Erleen Albright was found killed in her Daytona Beach home, a Volusia jury recommended Wednesday that Murphy should forfeit his own life.

A majority of the jury, 8 to 4, decided the 45-year-old Georgia man deserves the death sentence for the April 1997 killing.

Chief Circuit Judge J. David Walsh will decide the punishment, but judges must place great weight on what the jury recommends.

Murphy didn't react. After the hearing, his 24-year-old son, his mother and other family members left in tears.

Albright's family expressed relief the trial had ended and looked forward to the final sentencing. "I'm just happy it's almost over and we can have some closure," said the victim's daughter, 27-year-old Sabrina Albright.

That closure has been a long time coming, as Albright's murder went unsolved for years.

Her son, Tony Bobbitt, then a 17-year-basketball prospect at Mainland High School, found his mother's nude and battered body on her kitchen floor. Albright had been choked, struck in the head with a hammer and stabbed three times, according to witnesses.

On Wednesday, Albright's niece, Orzetta Wilbon, described how that murder haunted Bobbitt, especially as he struggled through high school, college and his professional basketball career.

"He has been going through so much since that day. He never imagined walking in and finding his mother in such a way," Wilbon said.

At the murder scene, police collected semen samples from Albright's body, but it wasn't until those DNA samples were resubmitted years later that there was a match with Murphy, who had given up a DNA sample at the Georgia prison where he was serving a sentence for theft. Murphy, who had met the victim at a club, was arrested in 2006.

The jury on Monday found Murphy guilty of first-degree murder, but Wednesday's hearing focused on the circumstances that would shape the jury's decision on punishment.

Assistant Public Defender Matt Phillips emphasized that a life sentence would mean that

Murphy would live the rest of his life in prison.

He presented witnesses, including psychologist Harry Krop, who testified that Murphy exhibits several symptoms of mental illness, with his history of rage reactions, depression and hallucinations.

But under cross-examination by Assistant State Attorney Matt Foxman, Krop also said that at the time of the killing, Murphy was sane and that he knew right from wrong.

Foxman argued that the heinous, atrocious and cruel way that Albright was killed justified a death sentence.

"As the defendant choked the life out of Erleen Albright, she had the foreknowledge of her own death and was looking at that face in the last moments of her life," Foxman said, pointing to Murphy.

The judge will sentence Murphy at a later date.