

Gov. Crist signs death warrant on child killer

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TALLAHASSEE - Gov. Charlie Crist signed a death warrant Wednesday for a central Florida man convicted of killing two young girls after raping their mother in 1993.

Richard "Ric Ric" Henyard abducted Dorothy Lewis and her 3-year-old and 7-year old daughters from a Eustis grocery store. Henyard, now 34, and a friend, Alfonza Smalls, raped the mother on the trunk of her car while the two young girls were in the back seat.

Afterward, Henyard shot Lewis several times and left her for dead, but she somehow survived. When the two little girls, Jasmine and Jamilya, kept crying and calling "Mommy," Henyard shot both in the head and threw their bodies into underbrush along the roadside.

Lewis attempted to grab a gun away from her assailants after the rape, but Smalls retorted, "you're not going to get the gun." The mother prayed to Jesus for help, and Henyard replied, "this ain't Jesus, this is Satan," according to court records.

Smalls, who was just 14 when the crimes took place, is serving a life sentence.

Earlier this year, Crist asked for a list of about five death row inmates who have served the longest or committed the most heinous crimes so he could sign warrants ordering those executions. Henyard, who was sentenced to die in 1994, met that criteria. There are 387 inmates on Florida's death row.

"When you look at the horrific nature of this crime, it lets you know that the penalty he will receive is certainly justified," Crist said Wednesday, adding that it was "unimaginable that any human being could carry out such a horrendous act."

The governor's order set the execution for Tuesday, Sept. 23 at Florida State Prison.

The warrant for Henyard was the second signed by Crist since taking office. The first was executed last week when Mark Dean Schwab died from a lethal injection for the 1991 murder of an 11-year-old boy.

Last year was the first since 1982 that there wasn't an execution in Florida. Former Gov. Jeb Bush placed a moratorium on executions as Crist was preparing to take office.

Bush called for a study of lethal injection after it took twice as long as usual - 34 minutes - for convicted killer Angel Diaz, 55, to die in December 2006. Schwab's execution last week was uneventful.

Associated Press Writer Brendan Farrington contributed to this report.