

Florida executes man who killed 2 sisters

By RON WORD
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STARKE, Fla. — A Florida man convicted of shooting two young sisters in the head after raping and shooting their mother was executed Tuesday after a two-hour delay while authorities awaited final rulings from the U.S. Supreme Court.

Richard "Ric Ric" Henyard, 34, was pronounced dead at 8:16 p.m. He had been condemned for the death of 7-year-old Jamilya Lewis and her 3-year-old sister, Jasmine.

The execution had been scheduled for 6 p.m. but did not start until 8:06 p.m. The doctor pronounced him dead 10 minutes later.

Henyard kept his eyes closed and appeared to be mouthing some words as the execution began, but he declined to make any final statement.

He appeared to be shaking and having a hard time breathing after the lethal injection was administered, and stopped moving a minute later. The execution was the second under Gov. Charlie Crist.

Dorothy Lewis, the mother of the murdered girls, wrote in a prepared statement read by her husband that she still does "not have a feeling of resolution."

"This day has not brought any closure to my life," her husband, Hugh Brockington read. "Taking the life of Mr. Henyard is not going to revive my daughters."

Henyard and a younger accomplice carjacked Lewis and her daughters outside a grocery store in the central Florida town of Eustis on the night of Jan. 30, 1993. Henyard, then 18, raped Lewis and then shot her multiple times at close range, but she survived. He then participated in the shooting deaths of her daughters after they cried out for their mother.

Henyard ate most of his last meal — two fried chicken breasts, turkey sausage, fried rice, chocolate chip cookies and a Coke, said Gretl Plessinger, a spokeswoman for the Florida Department of Corrections.

In his 15 years on death row, Henyard only had one visitor. His godmother, Jacqueline Turner of Eustis, first visited him Friday but did not visit him as scheduled Tuesday, Plessinger said. Instead, a Muslim cleric visited Henyard.

"I pray that Mr. Henyard had sense enough to ask God to forgive him," Brockington read. "The question I would like to ask Mr. Henyard is, 'Why did you kill my babies? You shot them down like they were wild animals. Why?'"

Lewis, who talks about her ordeal as a pastor and motivational speaker in the Ocala area, did not respond to e-mails or telephone calls seeking comment before Henyard's execution.

"Today, I can truly say that I am no longer a victim, but I am victorious through the love of God," Lewis, now 51, wrote on a Web site, <http://www.prayerforsexualtrauma.org>.

Lewis and her daughters had gone to a Winn-Dixie about 10 p.m. when they were carjacked by Henyard and 14-year-old Alfonza Smalls.

Smalls repeatedly demanded that Lewis "shut the girls up" because they were crying.

At one point, Lewis beseeched Jesus for help and Henyard replied, "This ain't Jesus, this is Satan."

Henyard and Smalls raped Lewis before Henyard shot her in the leg, neck, mouth and between the eyes. She was rolled off the side of the road and left for dead.

As they were driven away by Henyard and Smalls, the girls yelled: "I want my Mommy! Mommy, Mommy!"

A short time later, the girls were taken from the car and killed with gunshot wounds to the head.

The day after the shooting, Henyard went to the Eustis Police Department and initially told a story implicating Smalls and another man. When police noticed bloodstains on his sock, he admitted helping abduct Lewis and her children. He also said he raped her and shot her. He said that he was present when the children were shot, but that he did not shoot them.

The Florida Supreme Court rejected all of Henyard's appeals Sept. 10, including his claim that Smalls was the shooter. The U.S. Supreme Court also denied two appeals filed last week.

A handwritten civil rights appeal filed by Henyard in federal court in Jacksonville was denied Tuesday. The appeal alleged the state's execution team lacks training and could cause a painful death if the IVs aren't properly inserted. That was the case during the December 2006 execution of Angel Diaz, who took more than twice as long as normal to die, triggering a moratorium that ended this year with new procedures for lethal injection.

The ruling was appealed to the U.S. 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, which affirmed the lower court's decision and denied a stay of execution.

Small was too young to face execution. He was sentenced to eight consecutive life sentences for the kidnapping, rape and murders.

Florida has executed 65 inmates since the execution of John Spink in 1979, 21 by lethal injection and 44 by the electric chair. Pedophile Mark Dean Schwab was executed July 1 for the 1991 slaying of 11-year-old Junny Rios-Martinez.

There are 387 men and one woman on Florida's death row, and Crist has said he wants to begin executing those who committed the most heinous crimes after they complete their appeals.