

Testimony to begin in David Edenfield death penalty murder trial

The jury should hear testimony Wednesday against Edenfield.



THE VICTIM: Barrios
CHRIS VIOLA

BRUNSWICK - A jury imported from 90 miles away will begin hearing testimony Wednesday in the death penalty murder trial of David Edenfield, who is charged with the sexual abuse slaying of Christopher Michael Barrios Jr.

The jury is expected to be empaneled this afternoon from Jeff Davis County, court authorities said. The jury selection process began Sept. 21 in Hazlehurst at the north end of the five-county Brunswick Judicial Circuit. As of Monday afternoon, about 60 had been qualified for the jury pool.

Jurors will be sequestered at an undisclosed location throughout the trial at the Glynn County Courthouse in Brunswick. After testimony begins, the trial is expected to last three to five days, authorities estimated.

Christopher, 6, was killed March 8, 2007. The kindergarten student's body was discovered a week later inside a black plastic trash bag hidden in woods about 2 miles from the Canal Mobile Home Park in Brunswick, where he had lived with his extended family.

Edenfield, 59, his wife, Peggy, 58, and their 33-year-old son, George, were neighbors of the Barrios family. All three remain jailed without bail on charges of malice murder, kidnapping and child molestation.

Prosecutors will be allowed to use the elder Edenfield's statements to Glynn County police detectives as evidence, Superior Court Judge Stephen Scarlett has ruled.

David Edenfield said his son killed Christopher and initially admitted only to helping hide Christopher's body. He later admitted greater involvement in the slaying, which led police to charge him with murder, retired detective Ray Sarro testified during a pretrial hearing.

District Attorney Stephen Kelley is seeking the death penalty against the father and son. Peggy Edenfield has agreed to testify against her husband and son in exchange for prosecutors not asking that she get the death penalty.

Edenfield's attorneys, James Yancey Jr. and John Beall IV, contend he can't receive a fair trial anywhere in Coastal Georgia because of extensive news media coverage of the case and public hostility.

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