

# Killer of former Jacksonville cop gets death penalty

**Officer was killed by his stepson after the officer stopped supporting him.**

- By [Dana Treen](#)
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Andrews

Retired Jacksonville police officer Roy Andrews had supported his stepson financially and emotionally for decades.

But when Andrews, 64, decided to cut Robert Earl Peterson off in 2005, the ex-cop paid with his life.

A jury found Peterson, 45, lured his stepdad to Greenlawn Cemetery on Beach Boulevard under the guise of having car trouble, [beat him savagely with brass knuckles then fatally shot him](#). Jurors recommended by a vote of 7-5 that he be executed for the murder.

On Thursday, Circuit Judge L. Paige Haddock agreed and sentenced him to death, calling the attack vicious and brutal, made all the worse by Andrews realizing he was going to die at the hands of his “beloved stepson.”

Before his sentence Peterson read a rambling 40-minute statement criticizing his court-appointed lawyers, the judge and prosecutors.

“The blood of an innocent man is now on their hands,” he told Haddock. “I did not kill my stepdad. ... I loved him very much, and no one and nothing can take that away from me.” Under Florida law, appeals are automatic in death penalty cases.

Jack Andrews, the victim's son and Peterson's stepbrother, said after court he stayed indifferent on whether Peterson should be executed. He said he was grateful that four years of court hearings and delays were over.

He said he spoke with his stepbrother in the hallway as Peterson was led to court by bailiffs. It was the first time in more than four years.

"I asked him how he was doing, and he just said he was doing the best he could," Andrews said.

The victim's wife wasn't in court, but Haddock said she opposed the death penalty for her son. But the judge said he couldn't overlook the fact that Peterson deprived Patricia Andrews of her husband and "continues to leach his mother's much-needed income."

"A good son does not murder his mother's husband," Haddock said.

The judge said Patricia Andrews gave her son \$35,000 in the year before the murder plus paid his \$350-a-month child support. The money fueled Peterson's drug habit and car racing hobby, but Peterson hadn't held down a job in a decade, Haddock said.

Finally, Roy Andrews had enough. He convinced his wife to stop giving Peterson money and told his stepson to move out.

Roy Andrews was working as a substance abuse counselor near Greenlawn Cemetery when his son called him because he said he was having engine trouble. When Andrews turned his back to look at the car, Peterson hit him in the head nine or 10 times with brass knuckles, breaking his jaw, knocking out his teeth and dislodging an eye from its socket. With his stepfather still conscious, Peterson shot him twice, the judge said.

Jack Andrews said it wouldn't have been out of character for his father to stop to help, even though he was trying to force Peterson to make something of his life.

"If Robbie needed help, he would have helped him. That's just the way he was," Andrews said.

Haddock said the murder was clearly planned down to Peterson borrowing a truck to pull it off, so his wouldn't be recognized. The judge said Peterson appears to have paid someone \$3,000 to dispose of the truck.

Assistant State Attorney Rich Mantei praised Jacksonville police for their investigation and said trying the case wasn't difficult from an evidentiary perspective. What was difficult, he said, was balancing all the emotions of family members in an inter-family killing.

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