

Green pleads no contest to second-degree murder in Hoffman trial

By Angeline J. Taylor • DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER • February 11, 2010

What was to be a routine hearing took a dramatic turn Wednesday when Andrea Green, charged in the death of police informant Rachel Hoffman, accepted a plea deal that will allow him to avoid the death penalty.

The hearing had been scheduled to assign a new attorney for Green, who faced a first-degree murder charge in the May 2008 shooting death of Hoffman, an informant for the Tallahassee Police Department. Green changed his plea from not guilty to no contest on a lesser charge of second-degree murder and robbery with a firearm.

No contest means Green doesn't contest or deny the charges. The plea deal calls for a sentence of life in prison without parole. His sentence hearing is scheduled for Feb. 24.

A smiling Green said to Circuit Judge Mark Walker, "The plea best suits me — a plea of life in prison as opposed to getting the needle."

"He hasn't seemed too worried about this whole process," Lance Block, attorney for Hoffman's parents, said of Green. "He's seasoned in the criminal justice system. Both of Rachel Hoffman's parents are pleased that Green will never have the opportunity to do harm to somebody else's child."

Walker was required to ask Green questions to ensure that he changed his plea on his own. One such question was whether Green understood that the "sentence is life in prison, and in Florida the sentence means life without the possibility of parole?"

Green replied, "I leave in a box. I know what it means."

Walker asked, "If you sought to withdraw your plea — between now and the time of your sentencing — you understand all bets are off?"

Green replied, "I signed it. I bought it. I got it."

Green's codefendant, Deneilo Bradshaw, was found guilty of first-degree murder and robbery in December. A jury deliberated three days before reaching its verdict. Bradshaw was sentenced to life in prison.

But Green, who had a more extensive criminal record, was considered the more dangerous of the two defendants.

Hoffman, a 23-year-old Florida State University graduate, was killed when a drug bust went bad in northeast Tallahassee. Bradshaw and Green were both arrested and charged in her death.

Block said he believes Wednesday's closure will "expedite" the civil action he has filed against the city of Tallahassee.

When asked about Wednesday's turn of events, Assistant State Attorney Georgia Cappleman said, "It may be a surprise to you, but it's not a surprise to us. It's something we've been working on for a long time."

Assistant Public Defender Ines Suber said, "Obviously, it's a victory to the defense."

She said the defense got what it wanted, which was to eliminate the death penalty.

"Obviously, it's kind of hard when you signed your life or contract your life in prison — especially for a person in their 20s. He was happy like he said that 'he wasn't going to get the needle' and be killed by the state of Florida," Suber said.

State Attorney Willie Meggs added, "They're no winners. What we are trying to seek is justice. It's hard to say if anybody likes this or dislikes it. If we had gotten a sentence of death, it's not like Rachel's going to come back."