

Inmate who killed Volusia prison officer sentenced to die

Judge sentenced Enoch Hall to death for killing corrections officer in 2008



Enoch Hall makes his first appearance in 2008 in the murder of prison officer Donna Fitzgerald. (Barbara V. Perez, Orlando Sentinel / June 26, 2008)

By Bianca Prieto, Orlando Sentinel

4:08 p.m. EST, January 15, 2010

Dana Shure looked over at her big brother and gave him a big thumbs up.

The waiting was over.

A Volusia County judge Friday sentenced prison inmate Enoch Hall to death for fatally stabbing Shure's sister, state corrections officer Donna Fitzgerald, in June 2008.

Shure's face was flushed, her hands cold, as she clutched at a silver heart-shaped urn — a piece of jewelry that contains her sister's ashes.

"I'm just so relieved," Shure said. "It's the justice she [Fitzgerald] deserved."

On June 25, 2008, Hall hid in an inmate maintenance facility at the Tomoka Correctional Institution, where he worked as a welder while serving two life sentences. When Fitzgerald went to find him, he took her by surprise and stabbed her more than 20 times.

She was alive during each wound, Judge J. David Walsh said during a sentencing hearing in a crowded Daytona Beach courtroom. She likely gasped for breath as the metal shank pierced her lungs, causing them to fill with blood. The wound that punctured her heart led to her death less than five minutes later, Walsh said.

More than a two dozen uniformed corrections officers sat in the courtroom on Friday — nearly all of them carried long-stem pink roses in honor of their fallen co-worker. No one was present for Hall.

Some wiped away tears as the judge recounted the details of Fitzgerald's death. Her brother, Donald Shure, plugged his ears.

Walsh handed down the ruling at 10:35 a.m., agreeing with a jury recommendation from October. Hall, dressed in an orange prison jumpsuit, stood as the judge sentenced him to death and didn't make any motion or sound.

The sentence was not a surprise.

Hall admitted he had killed Fitzgerald.

He told officers shortly after the murder that he "freaked out" and "killed" Fitzgerald, who was stabbed 22 times with a shank made of sheet metal.

Fitzgerald, 50, was unarmed.

Prior to the sentencing, Walsh allowed family members, a law-enforcement representative and two of Fitzgerald's coworkers to make statements.

Fitzgerald's brother told Walsh he wanted Hall to die.

"Immediate death. Immediate," Donald Shure said. "If it could be done today, I'd be ecstatic, I'd be thrilled."

But Hall will not be killed immediately. An appeal was filed to the Florida Supreme Court — an automatic action after a death sentence is imposed. No hearing was scheduled as of Friday.

And, assuming the sentence is upheld, it could take up about 12 years before he is put to death. Since 2000, inmates have had a choice to die by lethal injection or the electric chair, though none have chosen the chair, a spokeswoman for the Department of Corrections said.

Assistant State Attorney Leah Case and State Attorney R.J. Larizza, who tried the case together, were pleased with Walsh's sentence.

At the time of the attack, Hall was serving two life sentences for the sexual battery and kidnapping of a 66-year-old woman near Pensacola.

"Enoch Hall and people like him [are] why we have the death penalty," Larizza said. "In this case, the death penalty was the only remedy."

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