

Boatman's cellmate found dead

Boatman is serving two life terms for the murder of two SFC students.



Alan Youngblood/Star-Banner

Leo Boatman, center, takes the oath with his attorney Bill Miller beside him before he changes his plea to guilty Monday July 30, 2007 at the Marion County Courthouse in Ocala, FL for the Jan. 2006 murders of two Santa Fe in the Ocala national forest. He was sentenced to two consecutive life terms on the Florida Department of Corrections.

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A Largo man sentenced to two life sentences for the murder of two college students in the Ocala National Forest four years ago is under investigation in the death of a fellow inmate, according to officials.



Rick A. Morris



Boatman's 2006 victims, John Parker and Amber Peck.

Department of Corrections spokeswoman Gretl Plessinger said Wednesday that 24-year-old Leo L. Boatman was in an altercation with cellmate Rick A. Morris.

Morris, sentenced to life on May 28, 2008, for murder, died Sunday, just 16 days after his 28th birthday.

Plessinger provided no details of the altercation. She did say that the two were cellmates and were housed at the Charlotte Correctional Institution in Punta Gorda.

The spokeswoman said Boatman, who was born in a Florida mental institution to a mother who had a history of mental illness, has been transferred to Florida State Prison as a result of the incident.

Plessinger said the case is currently under investigation. Boatman has not been charged in the incident.

“I’m heartbroken for everyone involved ... from Leo, to the family of the victim here in Ocala, and now the victim’s family,” said Chief Assistant Public Defender Bill Miller who represented Boatman in Ocala.

Miller, who was out of town, said he heard about Boatman’s latest problems Wednesday and doesn’t know the circumstances surrounding the case.

In January 2006, the then 20-year-old Boatman murdered two Santa Fe Community College students, Amber Peck and John Parker, both 26, with a Romanian AK-47 in Juniper Springs.

Peck and Parker died from gunshot wounds to the head.

In July 2007, Boatman pleaded guilty and was given two life sentences.

It’s not the first time Boatman has been in trouble since he was transferred from the Marion County Jail to a reception medical center on July 30, 2007.

Plessinger said he was in trouble for unauthorized use of drugs in February 2009 and aggravated assault the following month.

He also has been transferred to different institutions. He was at Cross City Correctional in August 2008, and remained there until May 2009, when he went to Charlotte Correctional, Plessinger said.

From there, he went to Florida State Prison in September 2009, before returning to Charlotte in February 2010.

Some of the transfers, Plessinger said, were the result of behavioral problems. She said it’s not uncommon for prisoners to move around.