

Judge Dan Moore imposes death sentence for murder

Written by George Browning
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On July 11, after a trial that lasted four weeks, returning jury verdicts of guilty on two counts of Murder and an Arson charge, Judge Dan Moore of Clark Circuit Court No.1 sentenced Jeffrey Weisheit to death by lethal injection.

Weisheit was convicted of the double murder of Caleb Lynch (age 5) and his sister Alyssa Lynch (age 8) by setting their home on fire while Caleb was inside, bound by duct tape and Alyssa was in a closet within the home. The case was transferred to Moore's court due to the high level of publicity in Evansville, where the deaths by fire occurred on April 10, 2010. Weisheit lived in the home along with the children and their mother, Lisa Lynch.

The remains of both children were found in the rubble after the fire was extinguished. Their mother was working the night shift at a local business and had left the children in Weisheit's care for the evening.

Before sentencing Weisheit, Judge Moore told him he was a man with a "cold and depraved heart" in all he did that evening. Weisheit stuffed a towel into Caleb's mouth and then taped his mouth shut with duct tape. The young boy then had his hands taped behind his back. His feet were also bound by the duct tape. Flares were found at the death scene in Caleb's bedroom, including one tucked in the young boy's underwear. Weisheit took the stand at trial, denied setting the fire, but admitted that he had flares in the house on the night of the murders.

The home was declared a total loss by fire. Weisheit left in his car that night and was the subject of a police chase ultimately ending in Boone County, Kentucky some hours later. When he exited his vehicle he threw a knife at a policeman and struggled with police before he was subdued with a taser. Evidence found with Weisheit included rolls of duct tape, several packed suitcases and large amounts of cash he had earlier withdrawn from his local bank.

According to the Affidavit for Probable Cause filed by prosecutors, Kentucky police attempted to stop Weisheit's vehicle on I-71, at which time the vehicle sped off at high rates of speed. He was subsequently stopped only after law enforcement used "stop sticks" to blow out the vehicle's tires. When Weisheit jumped out of the vehicle, he screamed "shoot me" as he charged the arresting officers.

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In his statements to Weisheit at the sentencing hearing Judge Moore told the defendant he had listened to all kinds of evidence about him during the trial and sentencing hearing. Judge Moore told him it was “now time to talk about these two children.”

He told Weisheit “the manner in which you murdered Caleb was a brutal act that defies any level of decency. To hear it said during the trial that taping a child that way was acceptable because the child was misbehaving was absurd and offensive to the human ear. To consider that Alyssa was either placed in a closet by you, or that she ran to a closet to hide when her brother was being tortured by you both by the ignited flare placed in his pants and by flares that started the fire, neither the Court nor society can fathom the agony those children endured by your cruel acts.”

He continued, “Caleb will never have the chance to learn all about cars and car repairs which seemed so important to you in the evidence. You stole all imagination this child had and his right to grow into manhood, maybe fall in love, have his own children and have an adult life full of opportunities and happiness.”

The Judge also stated, “You took from Alyssa the brightness and happiness often seen in little girls who are learning about friendship, best friends and the opportunities the world holds as they grow into women. Alyssa’s and her brother’s last minutes, the last thing they likely remembered were a nightmare of pain and agony that none of us sitting here today can imagine. The law of Indiana provides that justice be delivered to you for the things you did.”

Judge Moore signed the Death Warrant for the convicted killer and had it served on him by Sheriff Danny Rodden in open court. Weisheit will be entitled to an appeal review by the Indiana Supreme Court. His execution date was set for June 12, 2014.