

Zoa Louise Cutler, Class of 1959.



Murder victim Zoa White was Carlos Kennedy's 'target'

MOBILE AL —

The Mobile man accused of bludgeoning Zoa White to death in her Spring Hill

Avenue home will be charged with capital murder, prosecutors said Wednesday



Carlos Edward Kennedy, 24, was arrested and booked into Mobile County Metro Jail early Wednesday morning on a murder charge in connection with the 69-year-old's death.

White's body was found by police June 28 after her grandson visited about 10 a.m. and saw the back door open.

Mobile County District Attorney John Tyson, Jr. said Kennedy will face an upgraded charge of capital murder because the killing occurred while Kennedy was committing a burglary. I don't believe she had any idea who he was," Tyson said.

Kennedy lived in an apartment complex on Mobile Infirmary Boulevard, just off Spring Hill Avenue, less than a half-mile away from White's House, jail records showed.

He had been arrested last year on a charge of indecent exposure; a municipal judge in February found him not guilty. Municipal Court records showed that a woman accused Kennedy of exposing himself while he was installing a TV connection in September 2009.

The complaint claims that Kennedy began masturbating inside the woman's house.

The woman, who agreed to talk with the Press-Register on the condition of anonymity, said she was just moving into her house, and Kennedy was installing satellite TV.

When the judge later ruled there wasn't enough evidence in the case, she said, "my heart just dropped."

White, formerly a real estate agent, worked on a campaign for Gov. Bob Riley and as special projects director for the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs.

Tyson said more details about her killing will emerge in court proceedings.

He said police were led to Kennedy through "hard police work," without the help of anonymous tips.

After White's body was discovered, police combed the two-story house for evidence. Investigators have said the cause of death was "blunt force trauma to the head."

"She was his target," Mobile police spokesman Officer Christopher Levy said Wednesday. "This is not the case where

it could have been a next-door neighbor or a man down the street.”

Levy said the physical evidence recovered from the scene was analyzed by the Alabama Department of Forensic Sciences, and police were able to identify Kennedy.

After interviewing him, Levy said, investigators determined there was enough evidence to arrest him.

Kennedy, if convicted, would face the death penalty or life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Jail records showed that Kennedy is scheduled to appear in court for bail hearing Friday.

25 Sep 2010 – More than three years after beating 69-year-old grandmother Zoa White to death with a claw hammer, Carlos Edward Kennedy was sentenced to death by lethal injection for his crime.

On Wednesday, Circuit Court Judge Joseph “Rusty” Johnston imposed the sentence, following the recommendations of the jury, which had only one vote out of 12 suggesting a penalty of life without possibility of parole.

Reading his sentencing order to the court, which included family members of White and Kennedy, Johnston said, “It’s unimaginable that a human being could have committed such an atrocity.”

In reading the facts of the case—which he called hard but not unduly complicated—the judge recounted how everything began with the promise of a work date between grandmother and grandson.

On June 28, 2010, after failing to pick up her 13-year-old grandson, the boy rode his bike to her midtown home to see if he could find her. When he arrived, he saw that the kitchen window was broken into, but thankfully didn't investigate further, Johnston said.

"It was providence he did not see what this defendant did to his grandmother," he said.

Crime-scene photos of White—who was later discovered lifeless with her pajama bottoms removed and her top pulled above her breasts—were the worst he's seen in 16 years on the bench, Johnston said.

"It is the sincere prayer of this court that you will meet your maker sooner, rather than later, and not mock this family and community for decades to come," he said to Kennedy.

Kennedy, wearing a slight beard and dressed in a blue Mobile County Metro Jail jumpsuit, showed no emotion at any point during the reading of Johnston's order. Per the sentence of death, his case will automatically go to an appeals court.

Assistant District Attorney JoBeth Murphree said she felt the prosecution "tried a clean case," and said that Kennedy's efforts during the trial to represent himself were nothing but a ploy.

"It appeared to me that Carlos Kennedy was just basically trying to play the system to perhaps create an issue for appeal," Murphree said. "(He) was sentenced to death today as he deserved to be."

After the sentencing order was read, the victim's daughter, Laurie Miller, said, "It's not a good day for anybody."

“the wounds don’t heal and certainly nobody wins today,” Miller said.

Murphree called Johnston’s order a “very appropriate” response to a “Most horrendous crime” and described White as “a totally innocent victim doing everything she could to keep herself safe, inside her own home.”

“No matter how hard a person tries sometimes, the bad guys get you,” Murphree said. “And I think that’s very scary to a lot of people when they see cases like this.”

Miller said she laments the weddings, graduations and holidays her mother—who she said she spoke to daily—can no longer experience.

“I remember her every day,” Miller said. “Those are the things that I just miss, and those are the things we won’t get back.”

She then took a moment to include Kennedy’s family in the collateral damage of the 27-year-old’s crime.

“Certainly, justice has to prevail, but it’s my opinion that families all lose,” she said. “I know that his family’s going to be suffering as well.”

Friday, July 10th 2015 - MONTGOMERY, Ala. (WPMI/AP) A state appeals court is overturning the capital murder conviction and death sentence of a man accused of killing a woman during a burglary in Mobile County.

The Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals ruled Friday that a judge should have let Carlos Edward Kennedy represent himself during his trial in the 2010 slaying of Zoa White.

The judge initially let Kennedy act as his own lawyer but reversed himself before the case went to trial.

