

If A Killer Cop Doesn't Get The Death Penalty, No One Should!

By Dick Braendle, Chief Courtwatcher

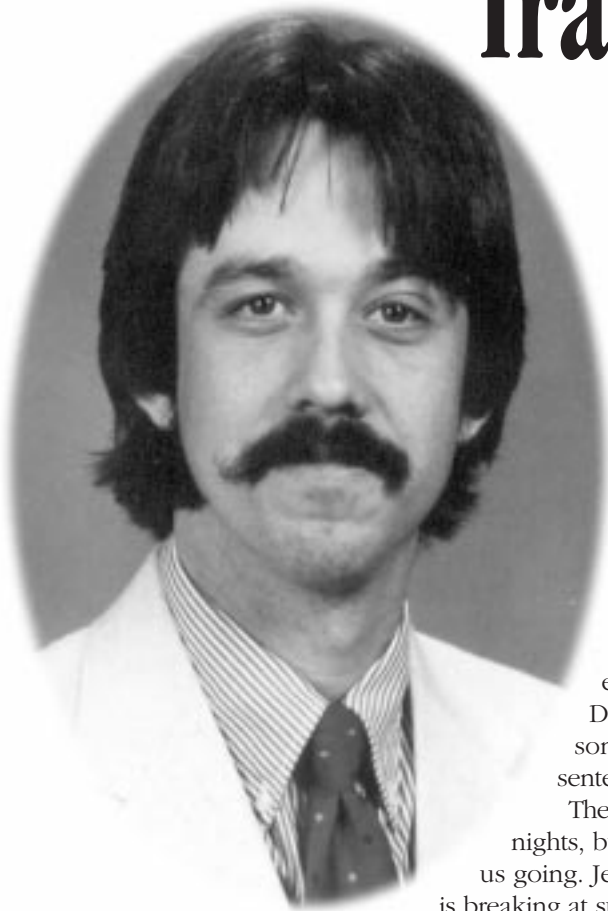
The Federal investigation and prosecution team, headed by U. S. Attorney, Jim Klindt, with assistance from three detectives of the JSO, did an outstanding job in gathering the evidence and convicting Karl Waldon on 14 felony counts. However, they were not successful in getting the death penalty on any of the three counts for which Waldon was potentially eligible. He will be sentenced to life without the possibility of parole. Therefore, on behalf of the Justice Coalition, I strongly urge State Attorney Harry Shorstein to seek the death penalty on a State murder charge. Double jeopardy is not involved because of the two different jurisdictions, and the fact that Waldon was not charged with "murder" in the Federal proceeding but with "violation of civil rights under color of law, resulting in death." I would also hope that Sheriff Glover will

recommend State prosecution because he initiated this investigation into the police corruption. Murder of a police officer is a statutory aggravator in all states having the death penalty. Premeditated murder BY a police officer in uniform acting in an official capacity as Waldon did when he initiated the death of Sami Safar by strangulation to eliminate him as a witness to a robbery, demands the death penalty even if there may be some mitigation. To my knowledge, such a statutory aggravator does not exist in any state because such a murder has never occurred in recent times. The public has to have complete confidence in law enforcement and a death sentence for Waldon would send a strong message to other officers contemplating similar crimes. Because of legal technicalities regarding the timeliness of asserting the Federal statutory aggravators, the Waldon prosecutors could submit only one aggravator to the jury, "killing for pecuniary gain", even

though "killing to silence a witness" is also a Federal statutory aggravator. Before the jury could even consider the possibility of the death penalty, they first had to unanimously conclude beyond a reasonable doubt that this one aggravator existed. Waldon's highly competent court-appointed attorney, paid by our taxes, argued that the murder occurred ONLY to silence Mr. Safar because the robbery had already been completed. Ridiculous, perhaps, but the jury bought it and the penalty phase could not proceed further. In my view, observing the jury, there was a small minority who would never have voted for the death penalty under any circumstances and I speculate that the others, to avoid further proceedings, also requiring a unanimous verdict, went along. In State court there would be at least three statutory aggravators: pecuniary gain, witness silencing, and HAC (heinous, atrocious, or cruel) because Safar was alive

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Tragedy Turns Friends Into Family *Our Son Murdered for a Joy Ride*



It was December 6, 2000, when we received the most devastating news any family could get. Our hearts were broken, and we were in a state of shock. Our son, Marty Mills, had been murdered. The next day the headlines read, "Worker killed for truck". A gunman killed a Jacksonville man before dawn yesterday outside of Rhodes Furniture Store. About six hours after Marty was slain, police spotted his stolen pickup truck on Interstate 95. After a brief chase, the police forced the driver off the road. Police arrested Derick M. Ford, 17, and charged him with aggravated fleeing, attempt to elude a law enforcement officer, and violation of a custody order. Derick was also charged with the murder of our son Marty, which was proven in a court of law, and sentenced to life in prison without parole. The holidays are unbearable, tears and sadness, sleepless nights, but with all the prayers and love we receive, keeps us going. Jesus continues holding us up. We know His heart is breaking at such evil in the world.

We have been able to see that out of tragedy good can also come. God has turned complete strangers into loving, caring, wonderful friends, and friends into family. We count our blessings everyday. P.S. A dear friend sent us this poem at Christmas of 2000.

Christmas in Heaven

I see the countless Christmas Trees around the world below with tiny lights, like heaven's stars reflecting on the snow. The sight is so spectacular! Please wipe away that tear, for I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year. I hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear, but the sounds of music can't compare with the Christmas choir up here. I have no words to tell you the joy their voices bring for it its beyond description to hear the angels sing. I know how much you miss me. I see the pain inside your heart, but I am not so far away. We really aren't apart.

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