

Jacqueline M. Lacy
State's Attorney



Office of the
State's Attorney
Vermilion County, Illinois

Rita B. Garman Vermilion County Courthouse
7 North Vermilion Street, Suite 201
Danville, IL 61832

Main (217) 554-7750
Fax (217) 554-7775

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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

People v. Cloanger Robinson 2020-CF-58

Danville Man Found Guilty of Brutal and Heinous Murders

On May 24, 2024, a Vermilion County Jury convicted 22-year-old Cloanger Robinson (DOB: 12/21/2001) in the brutal and heinous murders of three elderly Danville men following a week-long trial. Robinson will face a sentence of Natural Life in prison at a sentencing hearing on July 2, 2024.

State's Attorney Jacqueline Lacy, who prosecuted this case along with two of her assistants, presented evidence that on January 23, 2020, a 911 call was made by a family member after the three victims, Mr. Gentry, Mr. Jones and Mr. Reed were found deceased inside of 440 Elm Street. Police responded to the residence and found the three victims brutally beaten and stabbed.

Further evidence showed that on January 22, 2020, victims Nathaniel Gentry, Anthony Jones and Cordell Reed, who were lifelong residents of Danville, were spending time together with friends, playing cards at Mr. Reed's home at 440 Elm Street. Eyewitness testimony provided that victim, Cordell Reed, welcomed Cloanger Robinson, his nephew, into his home. Robinson was accompanied by two juveniles, one of which was Terrion Tinsley. Tinsley was sentenced on April 1, 2024, to Natural Life in prison. Another co-defendant, who was a juvenile at the time, pled guilty to robbery and agreed to cooperate as a state's witness to testify at court in order to assist the prosecution in securing the conviction of both Robinson and Tinsley.

Testimony at trial indicated that once inside the home, the three co-defendants were wearing latex gloves under knit gloves, but when asked, stated that they were worn due to the cold weather. Early on in the investigation, a detective with the Danville Police was alerted by a citizen who had located three pairs of latex gloves inside of knit gloves that appeared to have been discarded in storm drains mere blocks from 440 Elm Street. The gloves, along with numerous pieces of evidence gathered during the investigation, were sent to the Illinois State Police (ISP) Crime Lab.

Illinois State Police Crime Scene Investigator Tim Lemasters testified that his investigation of the residence required more than 12 hours gathering evidence to be sent for testing by the ISP Crime Lab.

During trial, State's Attorney Lacy noted that due to the quick police work of the Danville Police Department, a search warrant was granted and clothing was found by a detective inside a garbage can at the home of one of Robinson's co-defendants. The clothing was gathered and sent to the ISP Crime Lab. Forensic scientists testified during the trial that DNA found inside the clothing indicated it had been worn by Cloanger Robinson. Testing also showed that DNA belonging to all three victims was located on the clothing worn by Robinson. During arguments, State's Attorney Lacy stated, "Cloanger Robinson wasn't expecting that when he ran to and from his co-defendant's residence, under the cover of darkness to discard his clothes that he would be caught on a nearby security camera."

Cloanger Robinson testified during the defense's case in chief. Through Robinson's own testimony, he admitted to getting into an argument with Nathaniel Gentry and admitted to striking Mr. Gentry in the head three times with a baseball bat. During testimony, Robinson stated that he lied to police because he felt he could not face his own family.

Forensic Pathologist, Dr. Scott Denton, described the severe injuries of stab wounds and blunt force trauma that caused the deaths of all three victims. Dr. Denton also noted the defensive wounds that were sustained by the victims trying to protect themselves from the blows to the face.

During closing arguments, State's Attorney Lacy stated, "What Cloanger Robinson did to his own family is unimaginable, but he did it."

Following the trial, Lacy thanked the jury for their service. She expressed her appreciation for the cooperation of the brave witnesses and for the victims' families. "What happened to Nathaniel Gentry, Anthony Jones and Cordell Reed is inconceivable. My continued condolences are with the families of these men. I am grateful that the Jury returned a guilty verdict and I am hopeful that the families can begin to find a sense of closure."