



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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NOVEMBER 19, 2001
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PURKEY RECEIVES DEATH PENALTY FOR KIDNAPING, MURDER OF KC TEEN GIRL

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a man convicted of kidnaping and killing a 16-year-old Kansas City, Mo., girl was sentenced to death by a federal jury today.

Wesley Ira Purkey, 51, was found guilty of the interstate kidnaping of Jennifer Long for the purpose of forcible rape, resulting in her death, on Nov. 5, 2003. The sentencing phase of that trial began Monday, Nov. 10, 2003. The jury in U.S. District Court in Kansas City, Mo., deliberated 10 hours over two days before returning the death penalty verdict to U.S. District Judge Fernando J. Gaitan, Jr. The court will formally sentence **Purkey** on Jan. 23, 2004.

“The death penalty affirms the value we place on human life,” Graves said in his closing argument. “The murder of a child is an unspeakable act. This defendant is uniquely deserving of the death penalty.”

Purkey forcibly kidnaped 16-year-old Jennifer Long and transported her from Kansas City, Mo., to Lansing, Kan., where he raped her on Jan. 22, 1998. After stabbing her to death, Graves said, **Purkey** hid her body in a tool box and eventually used a chain saw to dismember her body, then burned the remains in a fireplace.

Purkey was already serving a life sentence in Kansas for the 1998 murder of an elderly woman, whom he bludgeoned to death with a hammer, when he admitted his crime to law enforcement officers on Dec. 16, 1998. **Purkey** feared spending the rest of his life in the Kansas Department of Corrections, he told officers, and hoped to be moved to a federal penitentiary as a result of his confession to the federal kidnaping charge.

The case was prosecuted by U.S. Attorney Todd P. Graves and Deputy U.S. Attorney

Matt J. Whitworth. It was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Kansas City, Kan., Police Department and the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow