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Killer spared death penalty on victims' families request

By Tonya Maxwell
Aug. 14, 2003 10:10 p.m.

BREVARD - A man accused of shooting to death his roommate's parents was spared a possible death sentence Thursday by the couple's family.

James Gilmour of Marietta, S.C., pleaded guilty in Transylvania County Superior Court to the first-degree murders of Tom and Carol Ann Lloyd.

Tom Lloyd, 60, and Carol Lloyd, 59, were shot to death on April 14, 2002, and were found 10 days later off N.C. 281 in Transylvania County.

The murder charges made Gilmour eligible for the death penalty, but Transylvania County District Attorney Jeff Hunt said in a statement family members asked for the plea agreement.

"I understand their desire to avoid continued legal proceedings, and I appreciate their need for a sense of closure," Hunt said.

A son of Tom Lloyd also would have been charged had he not shot himself to death during his capture by police, Hunt said.

Gilmour was handed two life sentences without the possibility of parole. He also pleaded guilty to two counts of first-degree kidnapping, robbery with a dangerous weapon and conspiracy to commit first-degree murder. He received a total of 30 years seven months to 39 years 10 months on those charges.

The Lloyds were last heard from on April 14, when Marietta, S.C, police responded to an alarm at their residence.

The couple's daughter reported her parents missing on April 16, and authorities began looking for the family's missing pickup and Honda Accord.

Police said they spotted Aaron Lloyd, Tom's Lloyd's son from a previous marriage, and his roommate Gilmour driving the stolen vehicles near Austin, Texas the next day.

Aaron Lloyd shot himself with a handgun when police stopped the pickup truck in Junction, Texas. Gilmour was driving the Honda along Interstate 10 in Ozona, Texas, where he was arrested by state troopers.

"The Lloyd family, they are just remarkable folks," Transylvania County Sheriff Bobby Orr said. "They did not want the death penalty imposed and certainly supported the district attorney in his decision to honor their wishes."

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