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Jun. 11, 2010

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## Retired teacher gets death penalty for wife's murder

### Man who killed wife sought ultimate sentence

By DOUG MCMURDO  
REVIEW-JOURNAL

John Matthus Watson III, 70, testifies during the penalty phase of his murder trial Friday afternoon. He asked the jury that convicted him the day before to give him the death penalty. Less than two hours later, they did. Prosecutor Marc DiGiacomo believes Watson became a Muslim while in jail awaiting trial and asked for the death penalty in keeping with the tenets of the Islamic faith. John Locher/LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

A man who asked the jury to give him the death penalty after it convicted him of killing his wife got his wish after less than two hours of deliberations Friday.

"He's a Muslim," said prosecutor Marc DiGiacomo of John Matthus Watson III, referring to a tenet of the faith that requires death for committing murder. "That's why he wanted the death penalty," he said about the retired teacher from Ontario, Calif.

DiGiacomo believes Watson converted to Islam during the four years he was in custody at the Clark County Detention Center. But DiGiacomo and co-prosecutor Pam Weckerly said they asked jurors to give Watson the death penalty not because he asked them to but because he deserved society's ultimate punishment.

The jury found there were two requisite aggravating circumstances in the slaying: that Evie Watson was killed during the commission of a kidnapping and that she was tortured or mutilated.

Watson, 70, lured his wife to Las Vegas in July 2006, ostensibly to celebrate her 50th birthday. In reality, he had been plotting her murder for more than a month because she was going to leave him and he didn't want to have to give her half of the family assets, prosecutors said.

"They write books about these kinds of cases," said DiGiacomo, a veteran prosecutor.

Weckerly said Watson managed to save roughly \$1 million over a 30-year career.

Her body has never been recovered, but Evie Watson's DNA was found in a shower drain at the Tuscany, in a room she was not supposed to be in as the room he rented for them was at Circus Circus.

He rented the room at the Tuscany with false identification. It was there that Watson shot his wife and then cut her up with a band saw.

In letters written from jail, Watson admitted to cooking and eating part of the body.

Weckerly described Watson as methodical, intelligent, manipulative, deceitful and dangerous, saying the murder was not typical of domestic violence murder cases.

"This is a little set apart," she said in telling jurors the killing was not a crime of passion, but one that was cold-blooded and calculated.

Jurors, in an emotional scene, met with the Watsons' three sons, all in their 20s, after the trial.

"We owe you so much," said Michael Watson.

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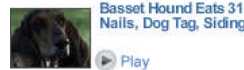
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"You don't owe us anything," said one juror who asked not to be identified.

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For juror Justin Crenshaw, the compelling piece of evidence that led him to find Watson guilty Thursday, and subsequently give him the death penalty, was testimony regarding police finding Evie Watson's DNA in the Tuscany shower drain.

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"That did it for me," he said. "There were some holes before that and I wasn't sure, but when we (deliberated) I kept thinking about her DNA being where she wasn't supposed to be."

Watson has a history with the law.

In 1967 he was arrested in Oklahoma after telling authorities he raped and killed a hitchhiker and dumped her body. But no charges were ever filed. Police couldn't find her body after an exhaustive search.

He was also arrested by the Secret Service after threatening President Richard Nixon in the early 1970s. He was arrested but not prosecuted.

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These whites guys crack me up. killing their wives..what a creep. why they always gotta kill their family?

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**hushhyena** wrote on *June 13, 2010 12:48 AM*:

This is incredibly surreal to me. John Watson was my math teacher all throughout High School, from Algebra 1 all the way to Calculous. He was also my instructor for Judo after school. He was very enthusiastic and very highly motivational, and he was a huge, positive influence on my life. He even wrote me an awesome letter of recommendation for me, when I needed one for college. It's just real depressing to see it come to this, really. I never would have expected this, considering he was such a

positive person. He always spoke highly of his wife to my grandparents every time we met for stuff related to Judo, like practice and tournaments and school related stuff. I suppose it's the way things are.. You never know who people really are on the inside.

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A 70 yr old dirtbag - cook him up real good - no lethal injection - just fry him with a dry rag atop his head.

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**DOMINO** wrote on *June 12, 2010 07:37 AM*:

What a whackjob! Should have been in prison a long time ago.

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**Vindictive** wrote on *June 11, 2010 10:03 PM*:

I can't imagine how conflicted the children must feel over this whole sordid mess. My heart goes out to them.

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**Darrin** wrote on *June 11, 2010 07:20 PM*:


Joel? Ethan? C'mon you guys! I can smell an Oscar!


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