

Georgena L. Roberts, Michael L. Roberts enter guilty pleas of first-degree murder in Jersey

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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JERSEY - Georgena L. Roberts and Michael L. Roberts have entered guilty pleas to a count of first-degree murder, Jersey County State's Attorney Ben Goetten said Wednesday.

The couple was charged in November 2017 in the death of son, Liam Roberts, who Goetten and prosecutors said was "starved to death" and "punished." Liam Roberts was 6 years old at the time of his death and weighed less than 20 pounds, way under normal weight for a child that age because of a lack of food and nutrition.

Goetten said sentencing in the case has been set for 10 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 19. The Jersey state's attorney said the sentence for first-degree murder, in this case, is 20 to 60 years in prison.

Goetten was uncertain at this point how the sentencing would go as it is up to a judge.

"It is no doubt the most tragic case I have dealt with as far as victims go," Goetten said. "I have had murder cases, sex abuse cases, and kidnappings and this is the most difficult case I have had. The case was very difficult for my investigators and my staff to complete to produce discovery. We are satisfied it is coming to a conclusion and now it will be up to a judge on Dec. 19."

Georgena and Michael's systematic pattern of abuse took place for approximately eight or nine months, Goetten said.

"In shaken baby cases, the parent or blunt force trauma causes instant death with the child, but this time, the two parents see the condition of the child day in, day out and do nothing about it," he said. "The facts, in this case, were very unique. I am glad it is coming to a conclusion."

Goetten commended the Jerseyville City Police and local law enforcement for putting together an excellent report.

"Now the case moves forward to the sentencing phase," Goetten said.