

Former Bethalto Woman Enters Guilty Plea To Three Counts Of First-Degree Murder, Sentenced To Life In Prison

by Sanford Schmidt

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BETHALTO - A former Bethalto woman pleaded guilty Friday to three counts of first-degree murder and was sentenced to life in prison, but the victims' family members said they forgive her.

Brittany N. McMillan, 30, cried throughout the testimony given by the victims' families.

"In all my years of being on the bench, I have never heard a more sincere or moving statements from a victim's family," Circuit Judge Kyle Napp said after accepting the plea.

McMillan and Brady Witcher allegedly came from Alabama to Bethalto on December 19, 2019, to steal a car from the home of Shari A. Yates. Witcher was also accused of first-degree murder. He allegedly shot Shari A. Yates, Andrew J. Brooks and John E. McMillan in the head, killing them.

Prosecutors said that authorities in Alabama agreed not to see the death penalty against McMillan. Authorities agreed she will serve her time in Illinois. Some of the victim's family said they plan to visit her in prison and they forgive her.

Assistant State's Attorney Lauren Maricle said that McMillan was charged under the accountability theory meaning she participated in the crime but did not pull the trigger.

Witcher is still in Madison County Jail awaiting trial.

"I still love you, Brittany, I am not angry at you; I forgive you. I am happy you came forward and confessed. You are a soul worthy of God's love. I will visit you and we can talk," said Amber Higgins, a member of one of the victim's family. McMillan had lived with the Bethalto family for some time before she left and became associated with Witcher.

Friends and family of the victims packed one side of the courtroom and all were in tears throughout the sentencing hearing.

McMillan was set for trial January 10, 2021.