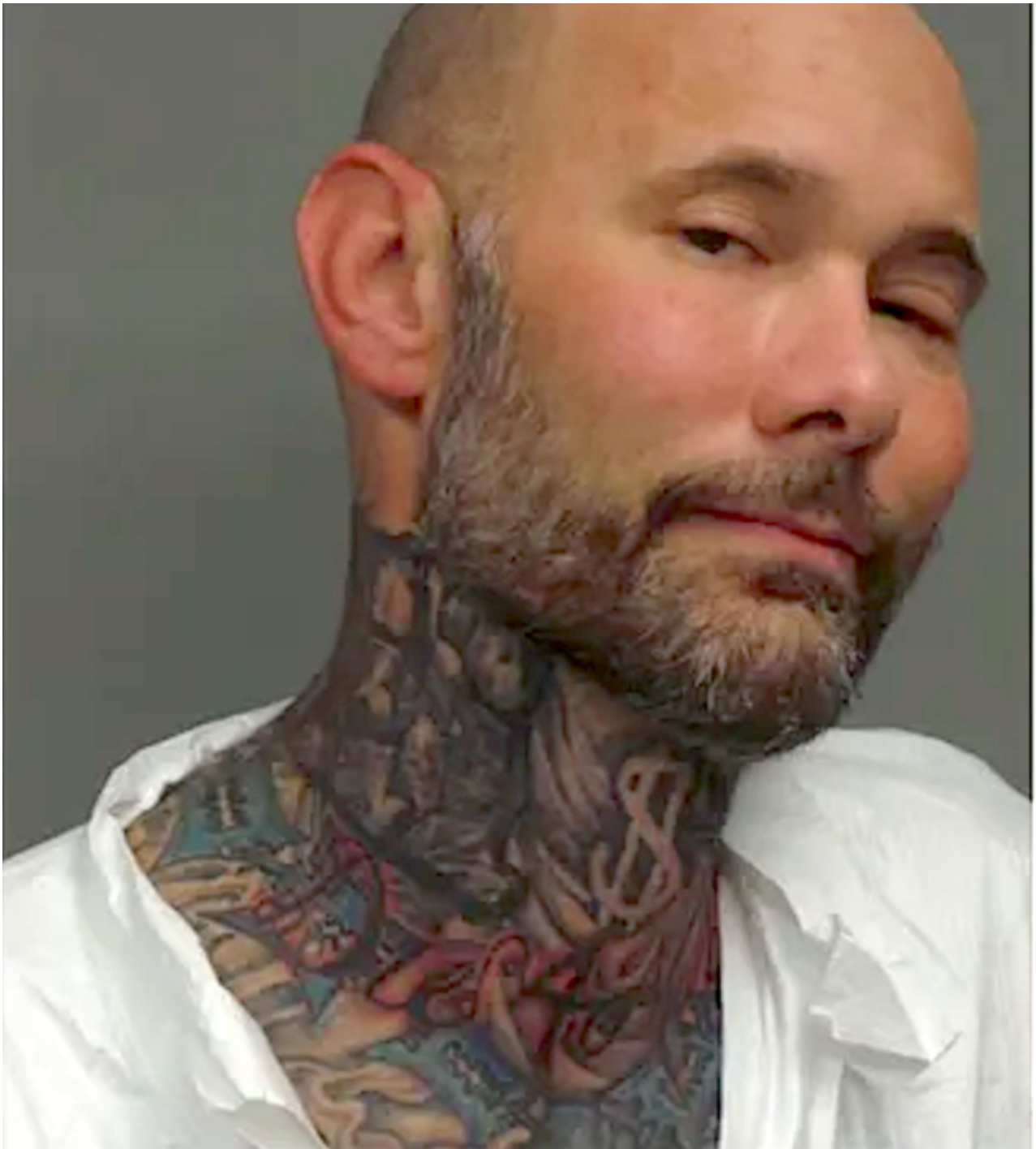


“Massacre” Defendant Gets At Least Life

by Sanford Schmidt

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EDWARDSVILLE - The brother of John McMillian, Chris, expressed thanks for the three counts of guilty murder convictions for defendant Brady Witcher on Friday after the conclusion of the verdict. Witcher faces at least a life conviction for more than one murder.



“I am happy they found him guilty; he deserves it and he deserves more,” said John McMillian’s brother, Chris McMillian, of Bethalto. He is no relation to Brittany McMillan.

Witcher, 41, was charged in the execution-style murders of 30-year-old Andrew Brooks, 59-year-old Shari Yates, and 32-year-old John McMillian. Witcher and Brittany McMillan, his associate, were also charged with murder and various other crimes in Tennessee and

Witcher also faces a murder and other charges in Alabama where he lived and was involved in a “business enterprise,” and in Tennessee, where he is accused of assaulting two people and stealing their car.

“The defendant and Brittany McMillan were involved in a cross-country crime spree. The murders in Bethalto were a brutal, senseless massacre,” said Assistant State’s Attorney Lauren Maricle.

“Shari Yates’ last moments were filled with horror, complete terrors, and unimaginable fear,” Maricle said. Prosecutors previously said that Yats, out of kindness, took McMillan in October.

Special defender Steve Griffin argued that the jury could not rule out McMillan in the Bethalto murders.

However, Maricle pointed out that a Bethalto police officer testified that Witcher made a spontaneous statement that “I’m the guy that killed those people in Bethalto.”

She also pointed out that Witcher’s, not McMillan’s, DNA was found on the .45 caliber handgun.

Maricle pointed out that Witcher admitted he owned the black and silver .45-caliber handgun that was found next to his bed when he was arrested in a motel in North St. Louis County. A gun of that description also came up in the Alabama and Tennessee crimes.

Circuit Judge Kyle Napp, who presided, remanded Witcher to the Madison County Jail, where he will be held without bail. A spokesman for State’s Attorney Thomas Haine said decisions of future potential prosecutions will have not been made.

If Witcher is convicted of murder in Alabama, he could face the death penalty.

State’s Attorney Thomas Haine praised the work of Maricle and Assistant State’s Attorney Morgan Hudson, as well as several police agencies involved in the investigation.