



Franklin Man Pleads Guilty to Aggravated Murder in Dayton Teen's Death

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DAVID P. FORNSHELL
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This afternoon, Michael Geldrich, 36, of Franklin pled guilty to aggravated murder, aggravated robbery, kidnapping, and tampering with evidence in relation to the December 1, 2013 death of 16 year-old Dione Payne of Dayton. Geldrich will be sentenced at a later date after he cooperates with the prosecution of his co-defendants Michael Jay Watson and Adam Joseph Patrick. In return for Geldrich's cooperation, Warren County Prosecutor David P. Fornshell said he will dismiss a parallel kidnapping count, and also a rape count. Geldrich is expected to receive an agreed sentence of 22 years to life in prison if he cooperates.

Geldrich admitted to beating Payne to death in the early morning hours of December 1, 2013. Geldrich allowed Payne to stay at his home in Franklin in order to sell drugs in exchange for Geldrich receiving drugs from Payne in return. Dissatisfied with his share of the proceeds, Geldrich decided to rob Payne of his money and drugs. Geldrich tied up and beat severely Payne while robbing him. After the beating, Geldrich drove an unresponsive Payne to Atrium Hospital and left him there without providing any identifying information to hospital personnel. Payne was later care-flighted to Miami Valley Hospital where he died from his injuries.

Police learned Geldrich's identity from hospital surveillance video and tips from the public after the video was published. Police conducted a search warrant of Geldrich's home finding both Geldrich and Watson present. They also found evidence of the crime including blood, duct tape and a pillow case that had been placed over Payne's head. Geldrich and Watson were then both arrested.

Watson is scheduled for trial on August 11, 2014. Patrick is expected to be tried at a later date.

The family of Dione Payne issued the following statement through the Warren County Prosecutor's Office:

“We are grateful to the Franklin Police Department and the Warren County Prosecutor’s Office for their work on this case, and are very satisfied with today’s plea agreement. Because the case against the other defendants is still ongoing, we will not make any further statements at this time.”



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