

Beat: News

Life Sentence for Man Who Shot Girlfriend's Ex-Husband in Front of Children

Sterling H. Roberts, 39, of Dayton

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USPA NEWS - Sterling H. Roberts, 39, of Dayton was sentenced in U.S. District Court today to life in prison for fatally shooting his girlfriend's ex-husband in front of the victim's children.

A jury convicted Roberts in March 2022 of traveling interstate in August 2017 to murder Robert Caldwell, the former husband of his then-girlfriend after cyberstalking the victim.

According to court documents and trial testimony, around 6pm on Aug. 15, 2017, Caldwell and his three minor children left a counseling appointment in Riverside, Ohio. While crossing the parking lot, According to court documents and trial testimony, around 6pm on Aug. 15, 2017, Caldwell and his three minor children left a counseling appointment in Riverside, Ohio. While crossing the parking lot, Roberts executed Robert Caldwell by shooting him multiple times in front of his children. Caldwell died at the scene.

Roberts' girlfriend at the time, co-defendant Tawnney Caldwell, and the murder victim had an ongoing dispute regarding the custody of their children. The two, along with four other co-defendants, collaborated to plan, execute and cover-up the murder.

"This heinous crime continues the American tragedy of children seeing loved ones shot down in front of them," said Kenneth L. Parker, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio. "Our justice system must work hardest to protect our society's children by ensuring their physical safety and mental well-being."

"Killing a father in front of his children is a cold and ruthless act that deserves a lengthy prison sentence," stated FBI Cincinnati Special Agent in Charge J. William Rivers. "I applaud the local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies that investigated this homicide and the prosecutors who pursued justice for the victim's family."

Judge Thomas M. Rose ordered Roberts to serve the life sentence consecutive to undischarged time from sentences in the U.S. District Court in South Carolina and to undischarged time in Montgomery County.

Sterling Roberts' brothers, Chance Deakin and Christopher Roberts; Chandra Harmon (Tawnney's mother); and James Harmon (Tawnney's step-father) were each charged in March 2018 and have been convicted of crimes related to the cyberstalking and murder.

Tawnney Caldwell was sentenced in July 2021 to 35 years in prison for interstate stalking resulting in death.

Kenneth L. Parker, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, J. William Rivers, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Cincinnati Division; Riverside Police Chief Frank Robinson and Sugarcreek Township Police Chief Michael A. Brown announced the sentence imposed today. Assistant United States Attorneys Amy M. Smith, Sheila G. Lafferty and Kevin Koller represented the United States in this case.

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Wendy writes for the United States Press Agency and is a former columnist with the Fulton County Expositor, Wauseon, Ohio.

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