



**Judge sets trial date in case of slain high school student**

354 words

9 April 1997

07:06 PM

Associated Press Newswires

APRS

English

Copyright 1997. The Associated Press. All Rights Reserved.

GREENVILLE, Ky. (AP) - A judge on Wednesday set an October trial date for the man accused of kidnapping, raping and drowning a popular high school cheerleader earlier this year.

Muhlenberg Circuit Judge Dan Cornette scheduled the trial for Oct. 28 for Robert Keith Woodall, 22. Prosecutors have already announced they will seek the death penalty in the case.

A grand jury indicted Woodall on March 18 on charges of kidnapping, rape and murder in the Jan. 25 death of Sarah Hansen, a 16-year-old honors student and cheerleader at Muhlenberg South High.

Miss Hansen disappeared while driving to rent a movie for her family and boyfriend. Her parents called police after two hours, and searchers found her body in a nearby lake a short time later.

Woodall has pleaded innocent.

Woodall, a convicted sex offender, was arrested and charged in the crime 72 hours after Miss Hansen's disappearance.

During an earlier preliminary hearing in Muhlenberg District Court, a Kentucky State Police detective testified that authorities found a bag of "muddy, bloody and wet" clothes under Woodall's bed.

Police also found bloody shoeprints inside the abandoned mini-van that the victim was driving and on the frost-covered pier at the small lake where her body was found.

The shoeprints matched the size and type of sneakers that Woodall was wearing when he was arrested. His fingerprints were found both inside and outside the mini-van.

Court documents show that Woodall was released from prison in February, after serving three years on charges of first-degree sexual abuse.

In that case, Woodall was originally indicted on five charges of having sexual contact with "several persons" younger than 12 during July, August and September 1992. Commonwealth's Attorney David Jernigan said the victims were girls between the ages of 8 and 10.

Prosecutors dropped three of those charges, and Woodall agreed to plead guilty. A judge rejected a request for special so-called "shock" probation, and sentenced Woodall instead to five years in prison.

He was released after just three years.

Rush

Document aprs000020011005dt4905kvz