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Last Row Party – Deadline News #1

Link to original story: <http://www.idsnews.com/article/2017/02/kyle-parker-gets-60-years-in-death-of-toddler-37fb>

SPENCER, Ind. – They saw no path to true justice here, no way to undo the damage, so they settled for putting an end to things.

Owen County Circuit Court Judge Lori Quillen accepted a plea deal Monday for Kyle Parker and sentenced him to 60 years in prison for the kidnapping and brutal murder of 15-month-old Shaylyn Ammerman [last spring.](http://www.idsnews.com/article/2016/03/spencer-man-charged-with-rape-murder-of-child)

“Many of us in this community wish we could give you the death penalty,” Quillen said as she delivered the sentence. “What I wish I could do as a parent and a member of this community versus what I should do as a judge are in conflict with each other.”

In an unscheduled hearing Feb. 3, Parker pleaded guilty to one count each of kidnapping and murder. As part of the agreement, brokered by Owen County Prosecutor Donald VanDerMoere and Parker’s attorney, Jacob Fish, the other charges, including rape, strangulation, child molestation and failure to report a body, will be dismissed.

“You took my loving, sweet and beautiful daughter away from me,” Shaylyn’s mother, Jessica Stewart,read from her statement to Parker. “You stole her from all of us and I hope you live with guilt and torment for the rest of your life.”

Parker, 23, sat silently in shackles with his head shaven, his glasses on and his back to the court.

In past statements to police and to the judge, Parker described how on March 23, 2016, he had stolen Shaylyn from her crib in her grandmother’s house in Spencer, Indiana, where he'd been hanging out with Shaylyn's uncle, Adam Ammerman.

Parker drove her to rural Gosport, Indiana. At some point on the drive, he pulled over and raped the little girl in the front seat of his car.

Parker smothered Shaylyn to death with a cloth he had in his Pontiac Grand Am and laid her bare body beside a tree by the White River. He burned her belongings — a onesie with owls on it and a Winnie the Pooh blanket.

Throughout the hearing, Prosecutor Donald VanDerMoere described how the case against Parker had unraveled. The evidence had not led straight back to Parker, VanDerMoere said, but had instead left a frightening amount of gray area.

Stacy Brown, who investigated the case for the Indiana State Police, attested to the lack of physical evidence against Parker. Although many hairs were obtained at the crime scene, none had roots. They were useless to  investigators.

Parker provided conflicting accounts throughout the investigation. In some, he pointed a finger at Shaylyn’s uncle, Adam Ammerman, and her father, Justin Ammerman. In others, Parker admitted some or all of the blame.

At one point, Parker told police after he raped and murdered Shaylyn, he cleaned her body and himself with bleach in an effort to destroy DNA evidence. However, extensive investigation found absolutely no bleach residue, Brown said, and there were no bleach bottles found at the scene or in Parker’s car.

There were concerns about witnesses’ criminal histories that would have been problematic in a jury trial, VanDerMoere said. Computers seized from witnesses turned up searches for violent pornography, VanDerMoere said. He read aloud some of the searches to the courtroom, and Indiana State Police Detective Brown confirmed them.

“White female, bound with rope and gagged.”

“Good girls get punished by strangers.”

“Excessive spanking.”

“Girl eaten alive.”

“Girl hanged.”

Of the three people who were given polygraph tests about their possible involvement in Shaylyn’s death, two people failed. One was Parker, according to court documents. The other was not named in court.

Shaylyn’s family and Parker’s family sat in the front rows of the courtroom. Shaylyn’s grandma, Tamara Morgan, was dressed in pink and purple from head to toe — Shaylyn’s favorite colors. She kept her arm around her son, but looked back at Parker’s family often and nodded sympathetically.

Both families said they have been harassed incessantly in the last year. Morgan told the press she had been followed into stores, screamed at and bothered at home. The harassment got so bad her family had to move out of Spencer, she said.

Parker’s mother, when called to the stand, said people had vandalized her home and threw lemons, limes and oranges. She begged people to stop and pointed out that her husband had been instrumental in getting a confession from her son during the  investigation.

“All along we have wanted nothing more than justice for everyone involved in this case,” she said.

Shaylyn’s father, Justin Ammerman, took the stand and read his statement to Parker.

“When I heard all of the terrible things he did to my precious little girl, I wanted to die too,” Justin Ammerman said, his voice trembling. “Kyle, why did you do this to my little girl?”

While he tried to justify the agreement, VanDerMoere pointed out life expectancy in prison is significantly shorter than the life of an average adult. On average, inmates in Indiana live to be 64, VanDerMoere said. At the earliest possible release date, Parker would be 67-and-a-half.

“This is the functional equivalent of a life sentence for Mr. Parker,” VanDerMoere said.

If people thought the punishment was not severe enough, he said they should place the blame squarely on his shoulders.

“As a prosecutor, I am responsible for finding the truth, not what I want to find,” VanDerMoere said. “The fact of the matter is that this is an appropriate resolution. It doesn’t provide closure for everything, but it’s the best we can do.”

Red-faced and yelling, VanDerMoere pleaded with the judge.

“You need to accept this agreement,” VanDerMoere said, his voice breaking as he choked out the words. “This is not what I want, but it’s the right thing.”

Quillen did not need time to deliberate. She made no effort to hide her anger at Parker. She told him his actions were pure evil and that it was clear to her he had no moral compass.

She read through the charges and sentence briskly, then stared Parker down. He’d have to pay court fees and register as a violent  offender.

“Sheriff,” she said, looking away. “You can get him out of my courtroom.”

Outside the courthouse, circling the throng of  television reporters, a group of women protested with signs handwritten on neon green poster boards.

“Where’s the justice?” the signs read. “Justice for  Shaylyn!”

Officers hustled Parker into a police cruiser, which peeled away with its lights flashing, from the courthouse. The women shrieked and ran toward the car.

“Baby rapist, baby killer,” a woman with long, dark hair yelled. “Glad you’re protecting him from us grandmas.”